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June 1998

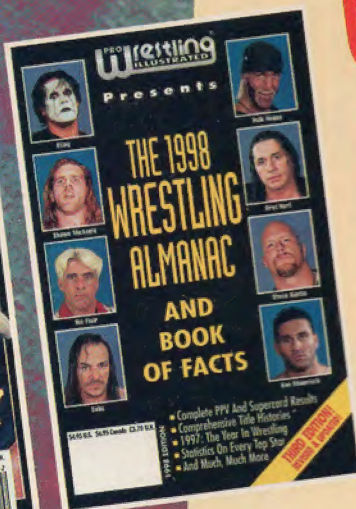
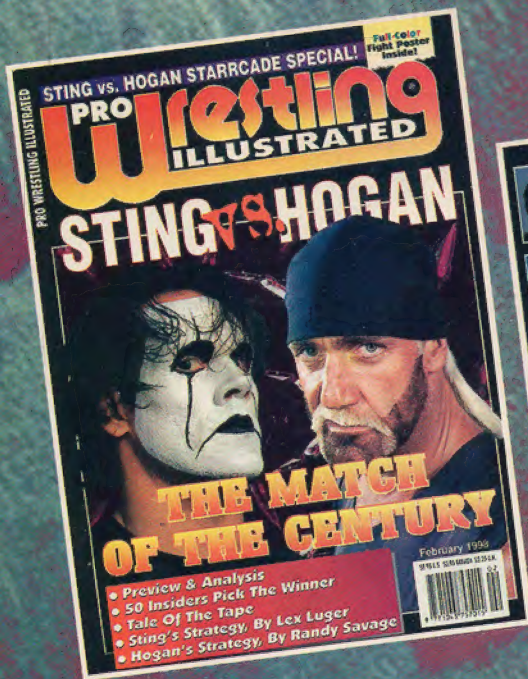
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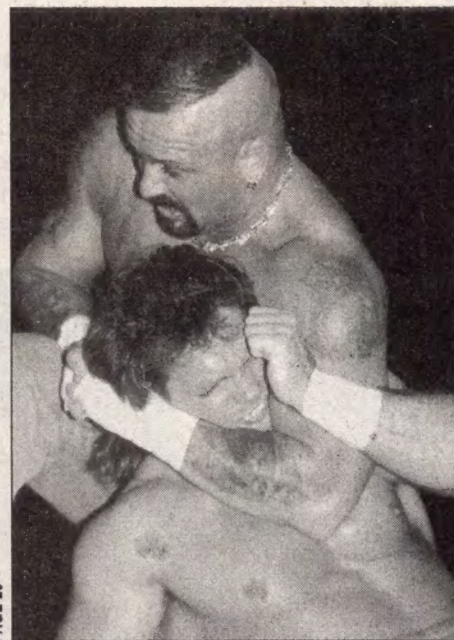
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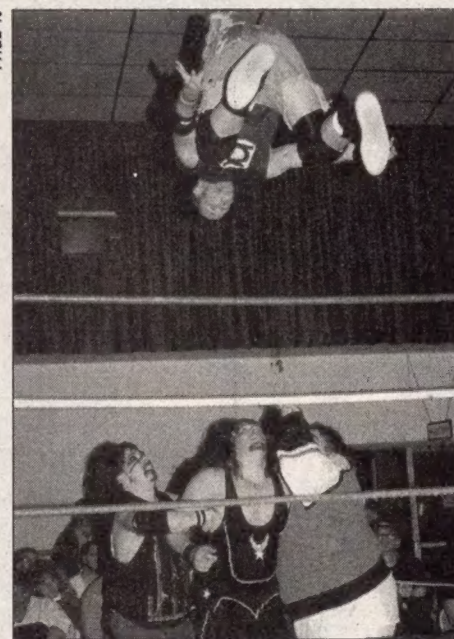
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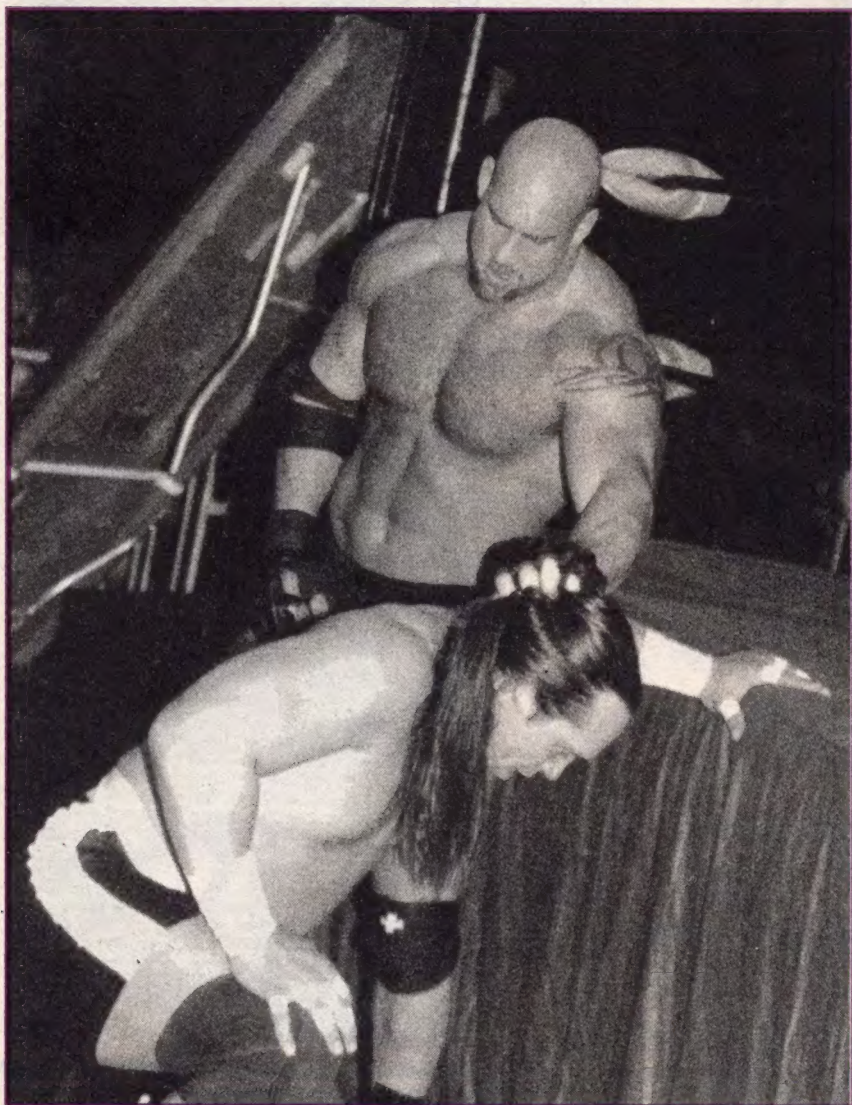
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Sincerely Yours

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CRYBABY CHRIS

Will somebody please slap Chris Jericho in the head? I'm tired of watching him throw temper tantrums like a three-year-old. Every good wrestler has a losing



Bill Goldberg has pretty much dominated the feud with Steve McMichael. Reader Edward Mann thinks Goldberg has the tools to inflict career-ending damage to "Mongo."

streak at some point in his career. The only way to get through it is to train harder and practice more.

He needs to stop showing off for the fans and be a real wrestler. If he wants to cry all the time, maybe he should see Raven, so somebody can feel his pain.

LISA ELLERY
Seabrook, NH

WAKE UP, MONGO

Steve McMichael better wake up and smell the coffee. There is no way he can handle Bill Goldberg ("Steve 'Mongo' McMichael: 'I'm Gonna Do A Sack Dance On Bill Goldberg's Face!'" March 1998).

No disrespect to Steve. He was a great football player, better than Goldberg was. But in WCW, Goldberg is on a whole other plane. Goldberg is a young up-and-comer who can physically dominate anyone in the ring. Nobody can muster the all-out fury that Goldberg brings to his matches. It's no wonder "Mongo" had to sneak-attack him with a lead pipe.

McMichael is fading, while Goldberg comes on stronger and stronger each time out. For your own good, Steve, stay out of Bill Goldberg's way!

EDWARD MANN
Atlanta, GA

NO RESPECT

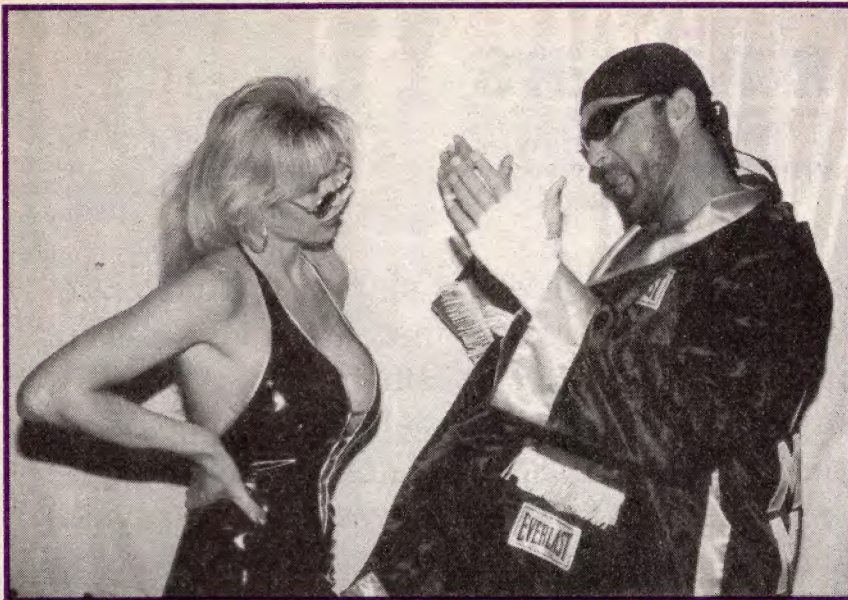
I think Marc Mero's new attitude stinks! He struts around the ring like he's a champion or something. What has he done? He can't even beat Tom Brandi without a low blow.

The way he treats the lovely and talented Sable is a disgrace. She is so beautiful, I'm sure she can find somebody who treats her better than Mero does. She doesn't deserve the treatment she gets from that bum.

WENDY GILLIAM
Tulsa, OK

LUNA FAN

When will WWF fans get to see Luna Vachon wrestle again?



"Marvelous" Marc Mero berates Sable, yet again. Reader Wendy Gilliam feels Sable would do much better serving as Tom Brandi's valet. She better hope Mero doesn't hear that!

I don't think she has wrestled one time since hooking up with Goldust. I was a big fan of hers in ECW. Luna is definitely hardcore. She fits the bill in McMahon's new WWF, but there are many Luna fans who remember when she wrestled and want to see her kicking butt again.

I think Luna and Chyna would make a great match, even though we have never really seen Chyna in action without Shawn Michaels and Hunter Hearst Helmsley.

CARL ROSATI
Philadelphia, PA

INCREDIBLY DISRESPECTFUL

Justin Credible is the biggest punk in pro wrestling today—bar none! I recently attended an ECW show at the arena in Philadelphia, where Sandman requested a moment of silence to honor the passing of Tommy Dreamer's grandfather. While everyone in the arena—including the Dudleys—respectfully observed Sandman's request, Justin grabbed the mike and told Tommy that he should have died instead of his "stupid grandfather."



If you think Luna Vachon's ringside antics are frenzied, you should see her in the ring. Luna fan Carl Rosati can't wait to see her take on a more active role.

What a creep! I was surprised that Dreamer even made it to the show, as his grandfather had died only days before. Dreamer should be applauded for his dedication, not subjected to disrespect from that worthless egghead Credible.

At least the Dudleys had enough class to chase Justin out of the ring.

EVERTT MORTON
Pittsburgh, PA

(Continued on page 52)

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REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

By Stu Saks

After hearing of the death of Louie Spicolli, I started to think a lot about my relationships with the wrestlers I've met. It's a lot different for me than it was when I first broke into the business.

In 1979, I was a 23-year-old, fresh out of college when I landed a job as associate editor for the London Publishing family of magazines. Unmarried and with few obligations on nights and weekends, I traveled every chance I got. Spending so much time on the road, I forged close relationships with a handful of wrestlers. Most of them were in my relative age group and felt they could relate to me a lot easier than they could a Matt Brock or a Bill Apter. After the matches, we'd sit at the hotel bar or a restaurant and talk about our fledgling careers. Most of the conversations were not for publication, but it still gave me a perspective on their lives, their hopes, their dreams.

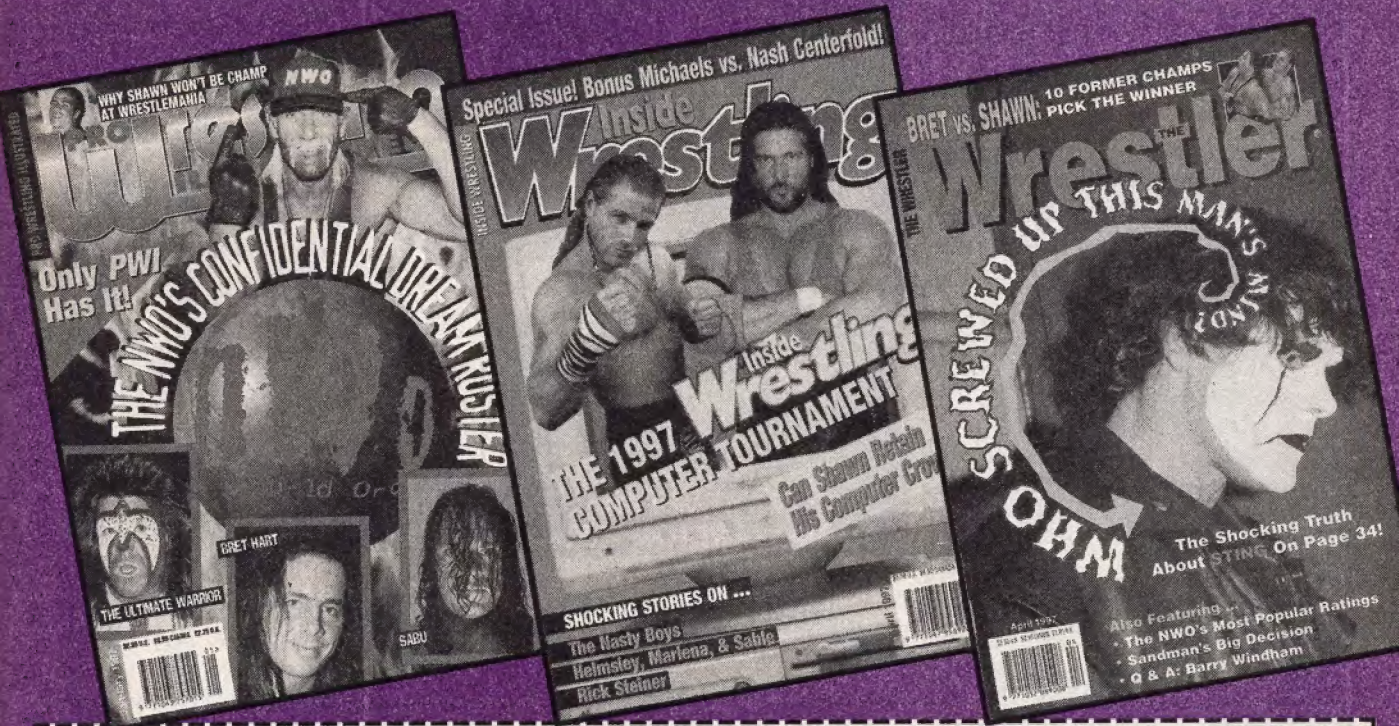
As I began to move up the editorial ranks, I found I had less and less time to travel. I still meet a lot of wrestlers, but I don't have an opportunity to spend as much time with them. In many ways, that's a good thing. For one, it's important to maintain some distance from the athletes to be able to cover the sport in a professional, objective manner. Second, and this might sound a bit selfish, the farther I distance myself from the wrestlers, the less chance I'll have of being disappointed when they inevitably turn bad—or, in the worst-case scenario, face tragedy.

I knew Louie Spicolli, but not well. I enjoyed the enthusiasm he brought to his quasi-membership in the NWO, how elated he sounded to be speaking to millions of people on *Thunder*. To hear that he lost his life at 27, when things were coming together for him in this business for the first time, was dreadfully disheartening. The cause of his death had not been determined as of this writing, but it's safe to assume that the inevitable trappings of the sport (the fast pace, the injuries, the mental pressures) played a role.

In '95 it was Eddie Gilbert, in '96 Neil Superior. It was Brian Pillman last year. It's Louie Spicolli this year. Next year? I can't bear to even think about it. I'll keep my distance, thank you; it lessens the blow.

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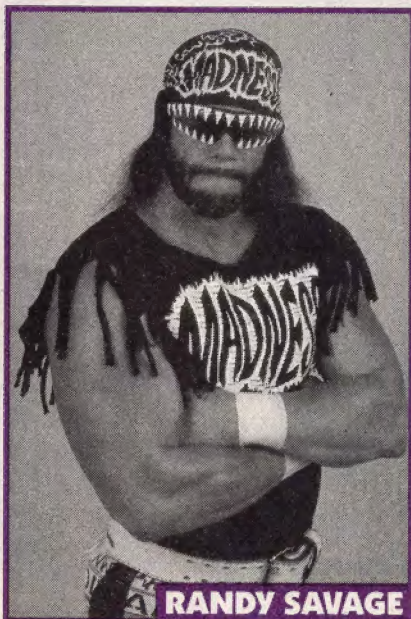
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NAMES MA

PROMOTERS NOW HAVE to set aside a separate dressing room for "**Macho Man**" **Randy Savage** due to the fact that the man is an enemy of both the NWO and WCW. And Savage loves being in this position.

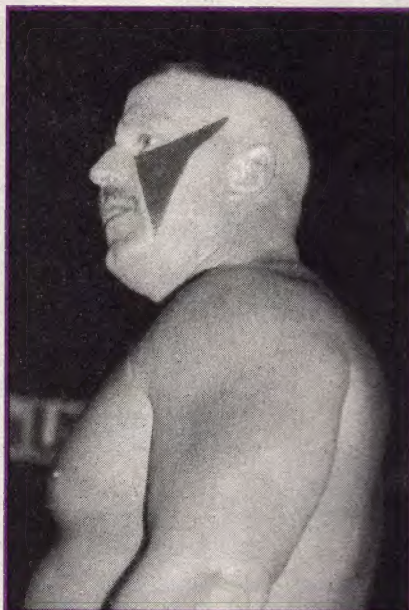


RANDY SAVAGE

"You could say I'm America's most wanted man," Savage told me. "A very intriguing place to be. The best part of this whole thing is that I have "**Hollywood**" **Hulk Hogan** terrified that I'm gonna ruin everything he tries to do, and brother, I like that. I like it a lot. I control his destiny, and he can't do anything about it."

Savage, of course, cost Hogan his chance to win a fourth WCW World title when he smashed him with a can of spray paint during his match with **Sting** at SuperBrawl VIII.

"The NWO jury has tried and convicted the 'Macho Man' on charges of treason, and the penalty is total annihilation at our hands," Hogan told me. "Not only will he pay the



ROAD WARRIOR HAWK

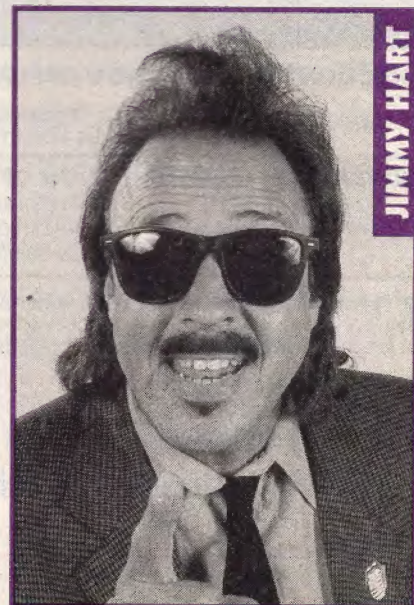
price, but that vicious little witch of his, **Elizabeth**, will suffer right alongside of him. It won't be a pretty picture, I promise you that!"

A lot of us were predicting the Steiners' breakup a few months ago, but I must tell you, I never expected to see **The Road Warriors** at each other's throats. "You know," **Hawk** told me, "me and Animal have been together forever, livin' in the streets, fightin' the wars. Hell, we ain't gonna get along all the time. Hey, as far as I'm concerned, me and Hawk are blood, and what happened a few months ago ain't gonna affect what happens from this day on," added Animal. "New Age Outlaws, you did something no other team in history has done, make me and Hawk get at each other. Now our minds are joined once again with one thought running through us, and that is to break your freakin' heads!"

Brian Adams, a.k.a. **Crush**, says his alliance to the NWO did not start in February, when he was first seen

on **Nitro**. "This whole thing was well planned out for weeks," he explained. "Mr. Bischoff knew that WCW had offered me money to wrestle for them, but Mr. Bischoff's offer was much better. It's a pleasure to share the ring with **Hulk Hogan**, **Kevin Nash**, and **Scott Hall**. As everyone knows from my recent past in the WWF, I function real well in gang situations, so I can assure the NWO that they made a very wise acquisition."

All-Japan Pro Wrestling and the WWF are still in negotiations regarding the exchanging of talent, and WWF executive **Bruce Prichard** thinks a deal will soon be worked out. "I'm optimistic that we may be able to see the exchange start by early-summer," he said ... It's no longer just a rumor that **Jimmy Hart** is trying to get the old **Hart Foundation** back together. That group originally consisted of Jimmy, **Bret Hart**, and **Jim Neidhart**, but the "Mouth Of The South" is thinking about adding **Davey Boy Smith** if a



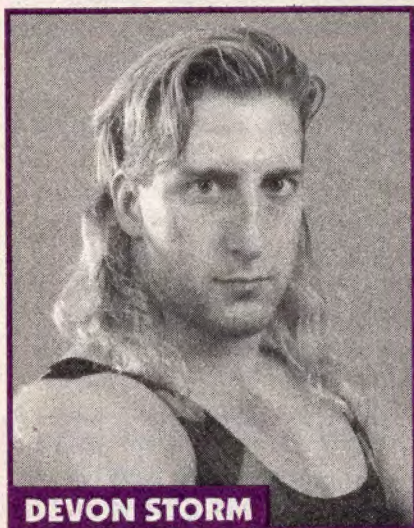
JIMMY HART

KIN' NEWS

By Bill Apter

reunion does take place.

"We're all good friends," Jimmy Hart said, "and we haven't had any formal meetings or talked about contracts or anything like that, but we're getting near that stage." Meanwhile, Hart's team of **Meng** and **The Barbarian**—**The Faces of Fear**—are still feuding with each other, with Hart in The Barbarian's corner. "Meng has done too many rotten things to me and The Barbarian," he explained. "He can't be controlled, and he's not a team player, so he's out, and I mean permanently!"



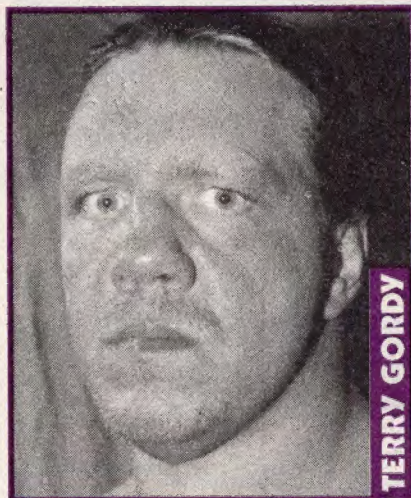
DEVON STORM

Devon Storm has won the NWA light heavyweight championship by beating **Reckless Youth** in a tournament final ... Fans are hoping WWF promoters will sign a match between **Sable** and **Luna Vachon**, but they have already hit a stumbling block. Said one promoter: "**Marc Mero** is holding back the negotiations because he's jealous of the further attention a headline match like this would bring Sable. Any more publicity for her will drive him over the edge."

Veteran NWA referee **Tommy**

Young is back in wrestling after a multi-year absence. Young is working in the WWF as, fittingly, an NWA-sanctioned official. "I'm proud to represent the NWA," he said. "The officiating I've seen in the WWF goes along with their style of wrestling, and the only word that can describe that is the word gross. Tradition—NWA tradition—is what the WWF is lacking, and I won't rest until I bring that tradition back to the forefront. I certainly will not tolerate the kind of rulebreaking I see in the WWF!"

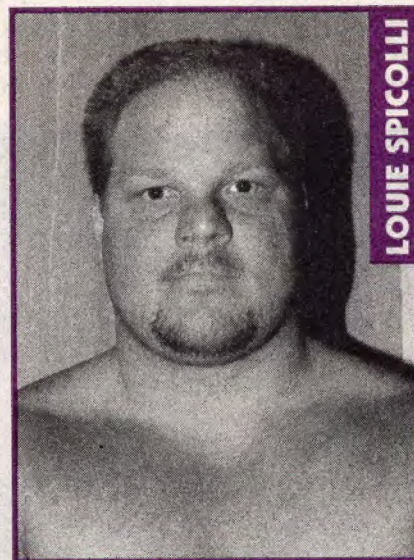
Dale Porter has regained the New Dimension Wrestling title from **Mr. Excellent** ... After talking to our "Where Are They Now?" department, **Ox Baker** called to tell me that he's trying to get the WWF to agree to bring him to the federation as a manager along with his new protege, **Abdullah the Butcher**. As ugly as those two are, I guess the WWF could call them DeGeneration Yecch



TERRY GORDY

... The Ladies International Wrestling Association will host its annual convention at the Plaza Hotel in Las Vegas from June 18 to 20 ... **Terry Gordy** is wrestling for Georgia's War

Zone Wrestling Alliance, where he is feuding with **Billy Black** ... With his fellow **Nasty Boy**, **Jerry Sags**, still on the sidelines, **Brian Knobs** is accepting dates in independent federations.



LOUIE SPICOLLI

The death of another young wrestler, **Louie Spicolli**, who was just 27, shocked us all. Spicolli, who had wrestled in Mexico, the WWF (for a time as **Rad Radford**), ECW, and most recently WCW, was found in his home in San Pedro, California, on the morning of February 15 by his friend **John Hannah**. Complete results of an autopsy done on Spicolli's body were not available as of press time.

Verne Langdon, the owner of California's Slammers Wrestling Federation knew Spicolli well since Spicolli spent a lot of time training at Slammers' facilities. He had high praise for him. "He was such a hard-working kid," Langdon said. "He never stopped trying to learn. Wrestling really was his life; it was like a fever that totally took him over. What a tragic loss." □

FUNNY THING ABOUT wrestling. Funny thing about wrestling people and wrestling fans. In so many cases, forgiveness comes easily. Almost too easily. A fan favorite become a rulebreaker, then becomes a fan favorite again, and the fans quickly forgive him for his transgressions and remember only the good side.

Sometimes we want to think only good about people.

Or sometimes a fan favorite will become a rulebreaker, and we'll forget that he was ever a fan favorite. Suddenly, he can do nothing right.

Sometimes we want to think only bad about people.

That brings us to Nick Patrick, the WCW referee-turned-rulebreaker referee who tried to mend his ways and obviously will not be given the

ON THE ROAD

With Dave Lenker

chance to do so. Why? Because the fans don't want to give him the chance. Because the WCW commentators don't want to give him a chance. Because J.J. Dillon, the chairman of the WCW Executive Committee, doesn't want to give him a chance.

So Nick Patrick, former referee, former bad guy, possibly reformed good guy, goes about his way, trying to live his life, trying to not get too bitter about what's happened, even though every time he looks at the tape of the Hulk Hogan vs. Sting match at Starrcade '97—and he has looked at it hundreds of times—all he sees is a referee who looks very much like him making a very reasonable three-count—the kind of three-count that's taught in refereeing schools—on a Hulk Hogan pin of Sting.

And he wonders whether anybody would have questioned the three-count if the referee was anybody other than Nick Patrick, who has become the last man on earth anybody in wrestling will forgive.

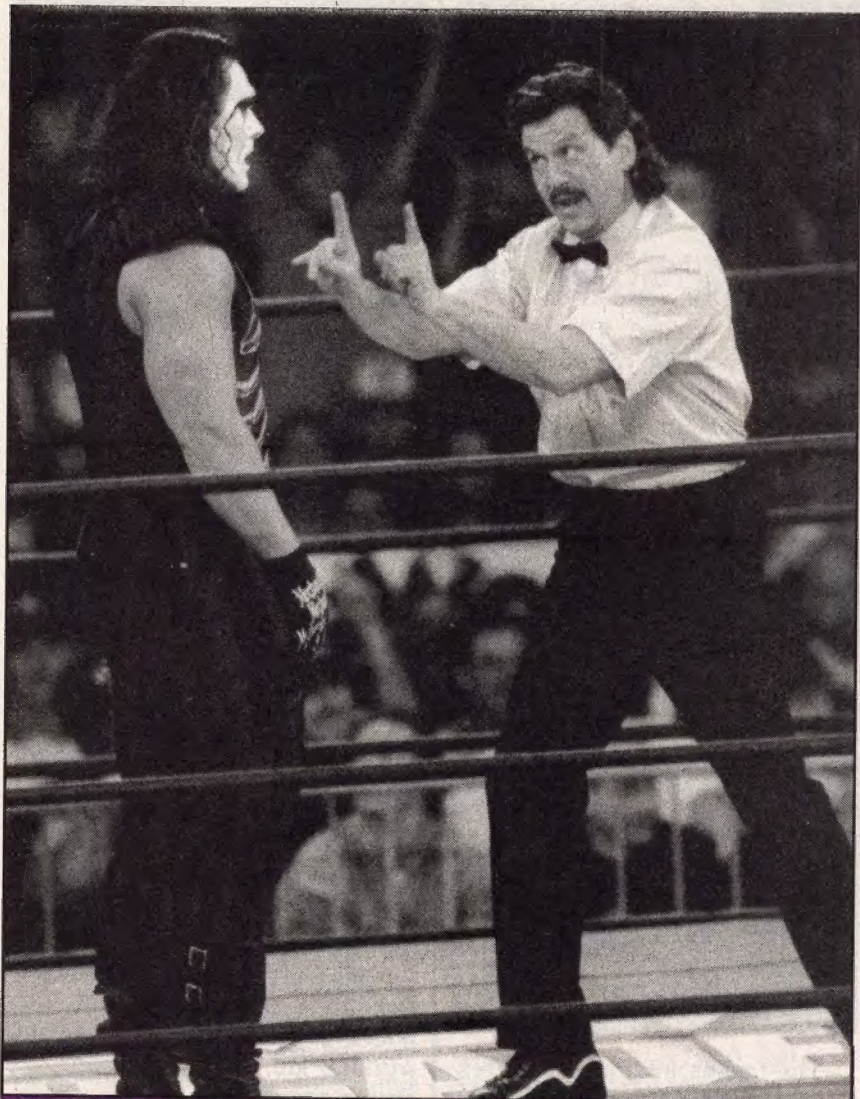
And he wonders ...

Why me? Patrick pondered a few days before SuperBrawl VIII. *Yeah, I've made some mistakes in my life, burned some bridges, rubbed people the wrong way, but who hasn't? I guess it's different when you're a referee. There's a different set of rules. But it shouldn't be that way.*

Sure. A different set of rules. A layman commits a crime and he serves his sentence or pays his fine. A lawyer commits a crime and he gets disbarred. Judges are held to a higher authority. Referees are supposed to be beyond reproach. Patrick crossed the line. He became a rulebreaker, the official referee of the NWO. Now it's too late to turn back, and Patrick wonders why he can't be forgiven. Because he is no longer beyond reproach. Because he crossed the line once before, he just might cross it again.

Yes, he goes about his business, tries to live his life. He goes shopping at The Underground in downtown Atlanta and gets taunted by

(Continued on page 54)



Nick Patrick was not at all hesitant to warn Sting during his Starrcade showdown with Hulk Hogan. But he didn't seem to be biased against Sting in that match. That night still haunts him.

Bloodbaths, Brawls and Women

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ECW TV 16 Sandman vs. Cactus Jack (3 matches), Raven vs. Dreamer, Melanie vs. Guerrero, Benoit and Melanie vs. Mikey and Norman Smiley, Raven and Richards vs. Dreamer and Mikey.

ECW TV 17 Sandman vs. Cactus (Barbed Wire Match), Sandman vs. Shane Douglas, Beulah vs. Luna Vachon, Public Enemy vs. Pitbulls, and the ECW debut of the Gangstas.

ECW TV 18 Raven and Richards beating Public Enemy for the Tag Titles, Taz vs. 2 Cold Scorpio, Taz and Eddy Guerrero vs. Melanie and Scorpio (twice), Cactus and Dreamer and Pitbulls vs. Raven and Richards and Dudley's. Cactus and Melanie and Scorpio vs. Steiner and Guerrero, Public Enemy vs. Gangstas.

ECW TV 20 Melanie vs. Guerrero (Final ECW Match), Francine vs. Beulah (Cat Fight), Raven and Richards vs. Pitbulls, Steiners vs. Scorpio and Benoit, Raven and Richards vs. Pitbulls (Double Dog Collar Match).

ECW TV 21 Steiner and Taz vs. Eliminators and Scorpio, Steve Austin imitating Hulk Hogan, Rey Misterio Jr. Vs. Psicosis (twice), Public Enemy and Mikey vs. Sandman and Scorpio and New Jack (Cage Match).

ECW TV 22 Public Enemy vs. Gangstas, Taz and Rick Steiners vs. Eliminators. Cactus vs. Dreamer, Misterio Jr. and Konnan vs. LaParka and Psicosis, Sandman vs. Mikey.

ECW TV 23 Cactus and Raven vs. Dreamer and Funk, Heavenly Bodies debut in ECW, Konnan vs. Jason, Mikey vs. Misterio Jr., Steve Austin vs. Mikey (twice), Sabu return to ECW.

ECW TV 24 Steve Austin and Mikey and Sandman (3 way dance), Misterio Jr. Vs. Psicosis (Mexican Death Match), Raven vs. Dreamer, Public Enemy vs. Heavenly Bodies, Shane Douglas returns to ECW.

ECW TV 25 Eliminators vs. 911 and Rey Misterio Jr., Konnan vs. Sandman (Bloodbath), Sabu vs. Steve Richards, Rob Van Dam vs. Axl Rotten, Scorpio vs. Mikey, Sabu vs. Van Dam, Misterio Jr. vs. Juventud Guerrera, Headhunters return, Sandman vs. Raven.

ECW TV 26 Raven and Richards vs. Dreamer and Douglas, Brian Pillman debuts in ECW. Headhunters vs. Bruise Brothers, Raven vs. Douglas (Pillman runs in). Sabu vs. Scorpio, Eliminators and Richards vs. Pitbulls and Francine (Triple Dog Collar Match).

ECW TV 27 Headhunters vs. Gangstas, Cactus vs. Chris Jericho, Misterio Jr. vs. Guerrero (2 matches), Cactus vs. Mikey (Cactus' last ECW match). Gangstas - Eliminators Brawl)

ECW TV 28 Raven and Bruise Brothers vs. Dreamer, Douglas and Sandman. Sabu vs. Mikey, Taz vs. Jericho, Pitbulls and Dreamer vs. Bruises and lee, Dreamer vs. Lee, Raven vs. Douglas.

ECW TV 29 Sabu vs. VanDam, Douglas vs. Scorpio, Taz vs. Scorpio, Jericho vs. Mikey, Jericho vs. Scorpio, Eliminators and Lee vs. Dreamer and Gangstas.

ECW TV 30 Brian Lee and Bruise Brothers vs. Dreamer and Pitbulls, Raven vs. Pitbull 2, VanDam vs. Mikey, Douglas vs. Pitbull 2, Sandman vs. Richards.

ECW TV 31 Jericho vs. Pitbull #2, Dreamer vs. Lee (Weapons Match), Gangstas vs. Eliminators, Sabu vs. VanDam, Eliminators vs. Sabu and Mikey, Jerico vs. Douglas vs. Pitbull #2 vs. Scorpio (4 Way Dance).

ECW TV 32 Sabu vs. Louie Spicolli, Sandman vs. Richards, Eliminators vs. Okano and Yamada, Dreamer vs. Raven from Japan, Shane Douglas vs. Pitbull #2, and a 4-way dance for the Tag Titles.

ECW TV 33 Doug urnas vs. VanDam, Taz vs. Dreamer, Lee vs. Terry Gordy (Bad Street Match), Dudley vs. Axl and D-von Dudley.

ECW TV 34 Sabu and VanDam vs. Furnas and Kroffat (30 minute draw) Taz vs. Johnny Smith, Eliminators and Lee vs. Dreamer and Gordy and Steve Williams, Douglas vs. Pitbull #2, Lee and Richards vs. Dreamer and Sandman (Ultimate Jeopardy).

ECW TV 35 Jericho vs. Scorpio, Eliminators vs. Gangstas, Taz vs. Guido (Shoot Fight), Sandman vs. Scorpio, Douglas vs. Dreamer, Sabu and VanDam vs. Kroffat and Furnas.

ECW TV 36 ECW Royal Rumble, Douglas and Francine vs. Dreamer and Beulah, Taz vs. VanDam, Raven vs. Mikey, Raven v. Sandman, Candito vs. VanDam.

ECW TV 37 Gangstas vs. Morton and Rich, Raven vs. Sandman (Texas Death Match), Raven vs. Sandman (Hair vs. Belt), Raven vs. Steve Williams, Funk vs. Brian Lee.

ECW TV 38 Funk vs. Tommy Rich, Sabu and VanDam vs. Eliminators (Tables and Ladders), Dudley's vs. Gangstas, Funk and Dreamer vs. Lee and Raven, Lance Storm vs. Balls Mahoney.

ECW TV 39 Taz vs. VanDam, Funk vs. Brian Lee, Balls vs. Sandman (Twice), Funk vs. Axl Rotten, Sabu vs. Spike Dudley, Raven and Shane vs. Dreamer and Funk, Great Sasuke and Hamada and nanina vs Taka and Men's Tech and Dick Togo (Michinoku Pro G-Man).

ECW TV 40 Preview of "Barely Legal", Eliminators vs. Dudley's vs. Gangstas (3 Way Dance), Video clips of "Barely Legal", Rob Van Dam vs. Pitbull #2, and the Evolution of Mr. Monday Night.

ECW TV 41 Gangstas vs. Dudley's vs. Eliminators (3 Way Dance), Bam Bam Bigelows return to ECW, Rude's debut as TV commentator, Sabu and Van Dam vs. Taz and Candito, Dreamer vs. Spicolli, Sandman vs. Balls, Raven and Richards vs. Funk and Dreamer.

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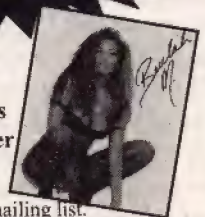
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Behind the Dressing Room Door

by David Rosenbaum

THIS IS BEAUTIFUL. Two wrestlers turn against each other, then discover a few days later that they're not allowed to turn against each other. That even though they now hate each other, they're going to have to team. And not only are they going to have to team and defend their tag team title, but if they don't give an honest effort, they're going to get in big trouble.

You know what? This comes as a big surprise to me. Until now, I didn't know ECW had rules.

Here's what happened: Bam Bam Bigelow teamed with Taz against Shane Douglas, Chris Candido, and Lance Storm. This was a noteworthy event because Bigelow was a former member of Douglas' Triple Threat, and Storm was expecting to be named a full-time member of the group that night. And Bigelow had spent a lot of time convincing Taz to team with him.

But Bigelow turned against Taz, then helped Douglas and Candido beat up Storm, and by the time the night ended, Taz realized he had made a big mistake by trusting Bigelow, and Storm realized he wasn't going to become a member of The Triple Threat.

Originally, Storm and Candido said they had no interest in wrestling together and defending their

ECW tag team belts after the incident. They were both going to choose a partner, and maybe the winner would be tag team champion. Then Candido met with ECW officials—didn't know there were any, to tell you the truth—and was told that he and Storm would still be tag team champions. They would be expected to defend the belts and give an honest effort in each match. If officials felt either man was trying to lose or was sabotaging his partner, he could be fined or suspended.

Said Storm: "The only way I'll save him is if he sticks his hand out for a tag."

Said Candido: "If that's the way

it has to be, then fine."

Said Douglas: "Sounds to me like Storm paid off the officials just so he'd get another shot at impressing The Triple Threat. Well, he can forget about it. He's just asking for more beatings."

Said Bigelow: "I don't care about Lance Storm."

Said Taz: "I don't care about Lance Storm, but I will get my hands on that traitor Bigelow."

This is all very interesting. Storm and Candido were willing to put the belts up for grabs, but ECW wouldn't accept the gesture. Now ECW wants them to keep teaming.

(Continued on page 55)



Lance Storm and Chris Candido have the ECW tag team belts for now, and they're happy about it. Actually, Candido is happy to have a belt, and Storm is happy to have one. But they're not happy that they hold them together.

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the Insider

by Brandi Mankiewicz

(The opinions expressed in "The Insider" are those of Brandi Mankiewicz alone and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of anyone else on the staff of this magazine.)

WHENEVER I SEE an innovative rulebreaking singles wrestler or tag team achieve great success, I have to ask myself the same question over

and over: How long will it take him or them to turn fan favorite? In this day and age, someone who uses so-called questionable tactics can earn respect and fan favor based on his track record.

So when I watch a team like the reigning WWF World tag team champions, The New Age Outlaws, I appreciate every day that they are running afoul of the masses and the wrestling estab-

lishment. For I know that the clock may be ticking and soon the NAO logo will emblazon T-shirts, hats, and foam fingers at WWF events all over North America.

This is a duo that was established with no fanfare. It begs the question that if a tag team is formed and no one is there, can it really make an impact? When it comes to the Outlaws, the answer is a definitive "yes."

Until late last year, Billy Gunn and "Road Dog" Jesse James were on a one-way course to nowhere. Gunn couldn't adjust to singles wrestling after splitting up with his brother, Bart. Don't even bring up that wretched Rockabilly stint. "Dog" was too busy warbling while sashaying to ringside. He was yet another Jesse James who

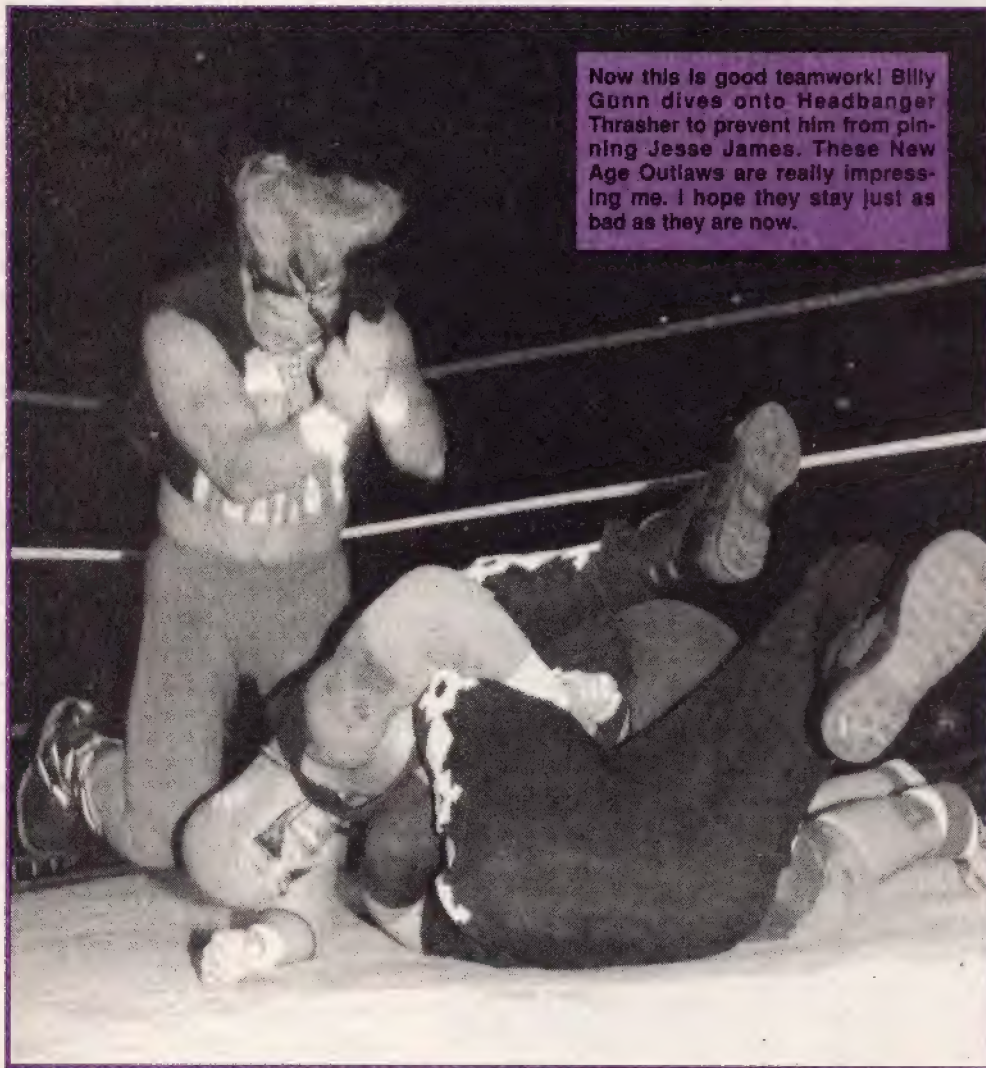
was terrorizing the country. This Jesse James did it with his mediocrity.

Two negatives certainly produced a positive when they formed. The two refashioned themselves from wannabe singers to quality innovators of chaos and extreme violence. I watched with great interest as they meshed together as a dangerous tandem. When they upended the bloated and overrated Road Warriors, I cheered. I heard that win called an upset so many times. The only surprise to me was that the LOD had the character and muster to hold the WWF belts in the first place.

(Side note: The Road Warriors have held titles for such a small percentage of their careers that I have a hard time calling them legends. Sorry, the word "domi-

(Continued on page 56)

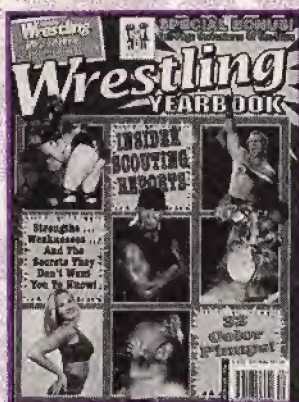
Now this is good teamwork! Billy Gunn dives onto Headbanger Thrasher to prevent him from pinning Jesse James. These New Age Outlaws are really impressing me. I hope they stay just as bad as they are now.



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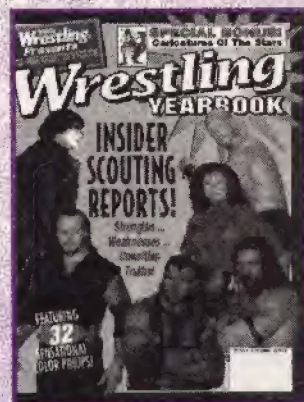
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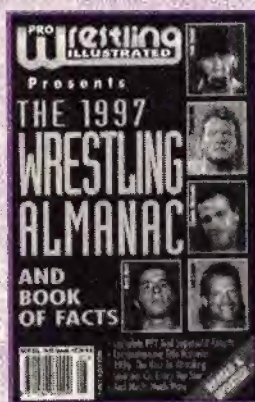
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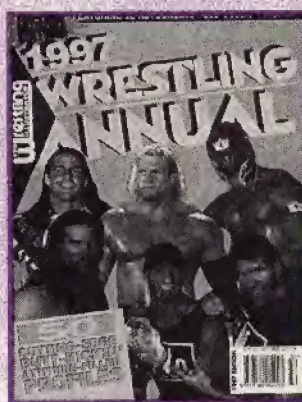
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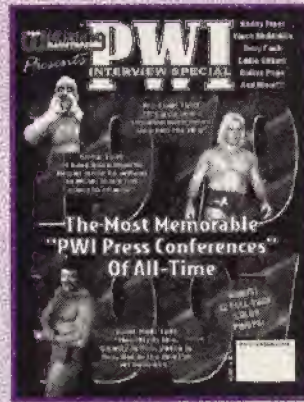
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ON Assignment

By Liz Hunter

I'VE NEVER WRITTEN an entire column on one wrestling move or hold before. As I sit before this screen, I'm questioning my own ability to come up with enough material to do this topic justice. But I'm hoping my outrage will fuel the

fire and fill these pages.

Before I start, let me make one thing clear: Despite his checkered past, I do have respect for James J. Dillon and his ability to run WCW. I also loathe the antics of Kevin Nash, who is making me

and many others quickly forget his days as a dominant and respectable WWF World champion.

But his "jackknife" power bomb should not have been banned in WCW.

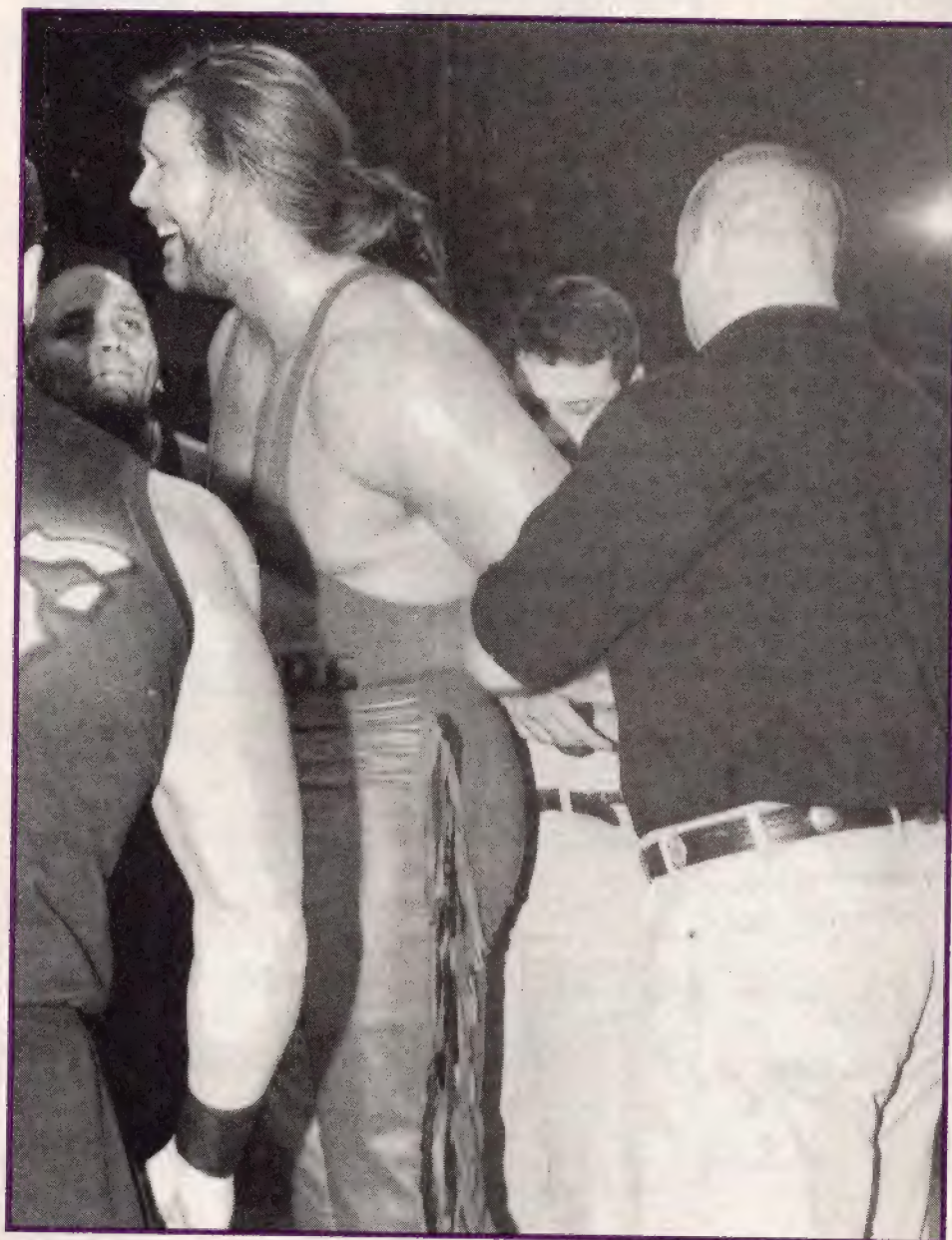
While the NWO may deserve their comeuppance, this just shouldn't have happened. Dillon intentionally singled out Nash and took away his strongest weapon. He claims that the move is just too likely to cause serious injury and cites what happened to The Giant at Souled Out as an example. But I'm telling you that we don't need to ban the "jackknife" just because The Giant was injured once by the finisher. If you add up the number of power bombs that Nash has executed and compare it to the number of wrestlers he has injured with the move, the scales would be tipped in favor of those victims who brushed themselves off and walked away.

Wrestling brings about injury every day. If you ban the "jackknife," why not ban the piledriver (I know, we've been there and done that) or planchas from the top rope to the floor? Important decision-makers like Dillon need to be more proactive than reactive. You simply cannot run a promotion by the seat of your pants.

Boy, do I hate making arguments in any way favoring the NWO.

Make no mistake about it, Kevin Nash is a thug. He hates authority figures.

(Continued on page 57)



Kevin Nash laughs as he gets handcuffed and led from the ring for using his power bomb finisher. Liz Hunter also finds it laughable that this move has been banned by J.J. Dillon and the WCW Executive Committee.

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- 1) Joey Styles
- 2) Paul E. Dangerously
- 3) Tommy Dreamer
- 4) Bill Alfonso

Lex Luger is also known as ...?

- 1) Totally Awesome
- 2) The Six Pack
- 3) The Total Package
- 4) None of the above

True or False: The Giant competed in the 1988 Summer Olympics as a member of the Austrian basketball team?

- 1) True 2) False

The Undertaker was once tag team partners with ...?

- 1) Lou Albano
- 2) Sgt. Slaughter
- 3) Rick Steiner
- 4) None of the above

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INSIDE WRESTLING CAPSULE PROFILE ²⁶⁷

OWEN HART

WWF EUROPEAN champion Owen Hart has emerged from his brother Bret's shadow to become a major player in the sport ... At 6' and 223 pounds, he hasn't let his lack of size stop him from having a brilliant career so far ... Nor did he let a lack of formal professional training prevent him from turning pro on May 30, 1986, in the Stampede Corral in Calgary (*"Performing in front of my hometown fans was such a thrill"*) ... Named PWI 1987 Rookie of the Year ... Toured Great Britain and beat light heavyweight champ Steve Wright for the title while there ... Later beat Les Thornton for the Stampede Commonwealth title ... Made his WWF debut in 1988, then disappeared to Japan, where he defeated Hiroshi Hase for the IWGP junior heavyweight belt in May of that year ... Returned to the WWF as The Blue Blazer and later claimed the federation forced him to compete with a mask to prevent comparisons to Bret (*"That was a big slap in the face"*) ... Teamed with Koko B. Ware to form High Energy in April 1992; they wrestled for the WWF World tag team title on several occasions (*"We never got a fair match"*) ... Beat Papa Shango for the USWA title on June 21, 1993 ... Lost the belt

to Jerry Lawler in the midst of a bitter feud ... Had a public falling-out with Bret after their match with The Quebecers at the 1994 Royal Rumble ... Owen beat Bret at WrestleMania X, but later on the card, Bret beat Yokozuna for the WWF World title ... Owen got dozens of title shots against his brother, but could never take his

tured the belts with brother-in-law Davey Boy Smith by beating The Smokin' Gunns on September 22, 1996 (*"Yeah, I felt a little family pride"*) ... Won the WWF I-C belt cleanly from Rocky Maivia on April 28, 1997, just a few weeks after he and Davey Boy reunited with Bret and re-formed The Hart Foundation (*"The happiest moment I'd had in a long time"*) ... The group got booed in the U.S. and cheered in Canada ...

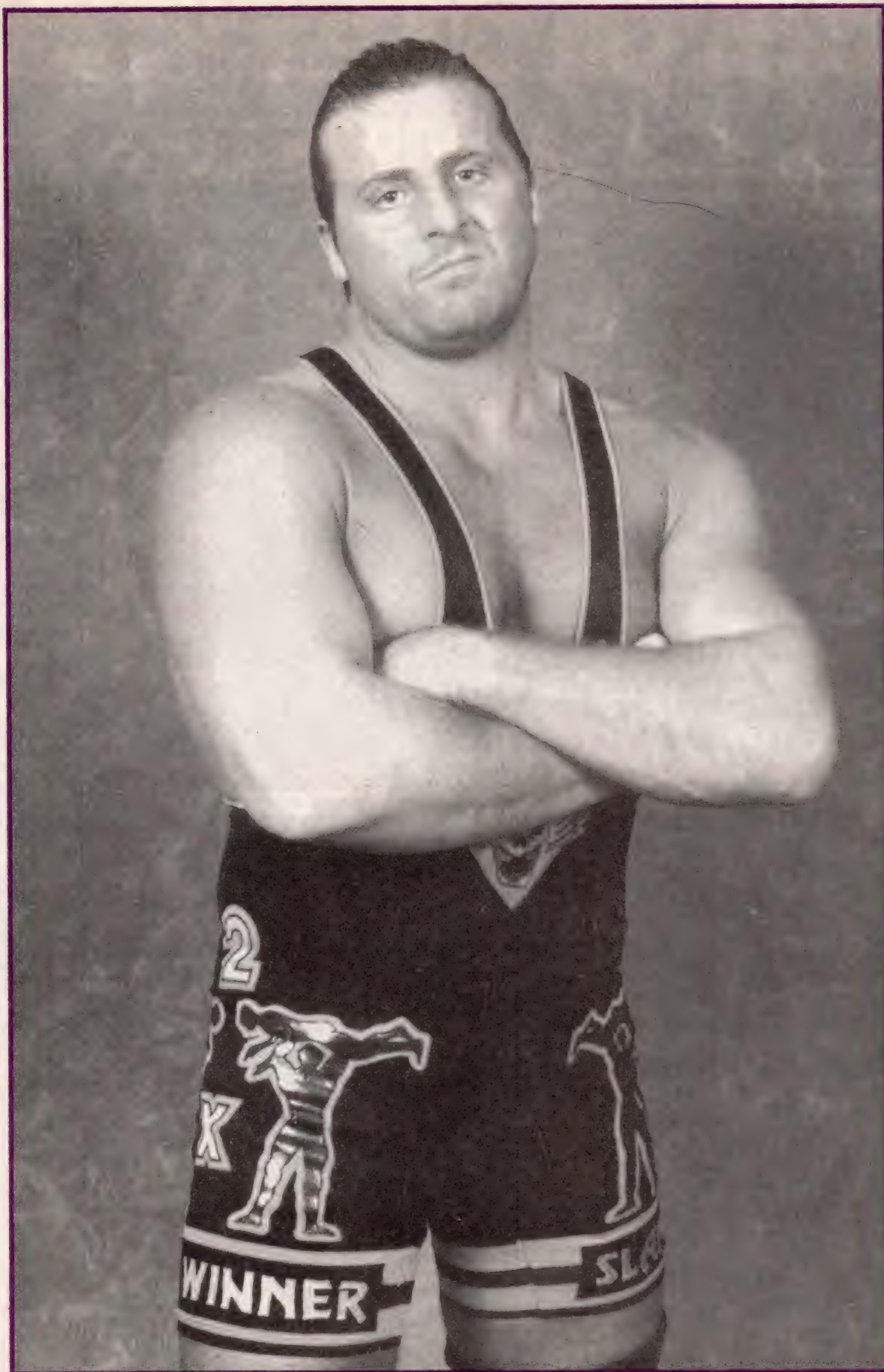
Temporarily paralyzed Steve Austin with a "tombstone" piledriver at SummerSlam '97, but Austin recovered and pinned him for the belt ... Reclaimed the I-C belt when he pinned Faarooq in a tournament for the vacant title ... Lost the belt again to Austin on November 9, 1997 (*"Give the man credit for coming back"*) ... Began feuding with DeGeneration X after Bret left the WWF for WCW and even came out of the crowd to attack Shawn Michaels several times ... Angered WWF owner Vince McMahon with his attacks on HBK, but he didn't care (*"What's he going to do to me?"*) ... Was awarded the WWF's European belt by WWF Commissioner Sgt. Slaughter after he beat



Owen Hart's "sharpshooter" is one of the most effective finishing holds in the WWF. So far, it has earned him tag team, I-C, and European gold. Will the WWF World title be the next championship he claims?

belt (*"I'm glad all that is over"*) ... Teamed with Yokozuna to win the WWF tag team belts from The Smokin' Gunns at WrestleMania XI in 1995 ... Lost the belts to Shawn Michaels and Diesel on September 24, 1995 ... Recap-

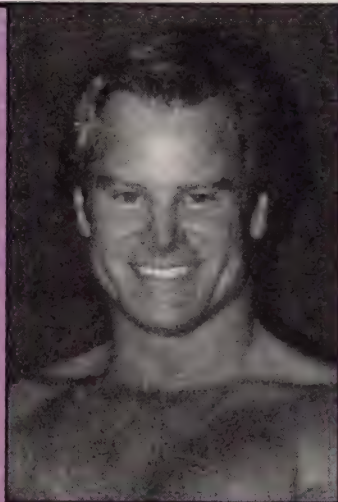
Goldust, who was impersonating the injured previous champion, Hunter Hearst Helmsley (*"I got the last laugh there"*) ... Don't be surprised if his feud with DX lasts throughout 1998 and maybe even beyond. □



OWEN HART

Where Are They NOW

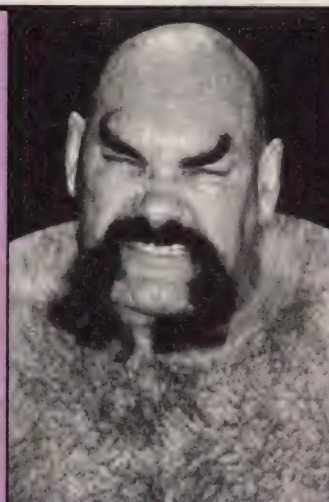
Do you have a favorite wrestler who has left your area? Are you wondering where he is today? Then this special column is just for you. Each month we will update the whereabouts of four current or former wrestlers



STAN LANE

The former wrestler-turned-WWF broadcaster is still involved in broadcasting, but in a different sport. Stan appears regularly on ESPN's *Speed-World*, an off-shore powerboat racing show. "I've always had an interest in water sports," said Lane, who spends a

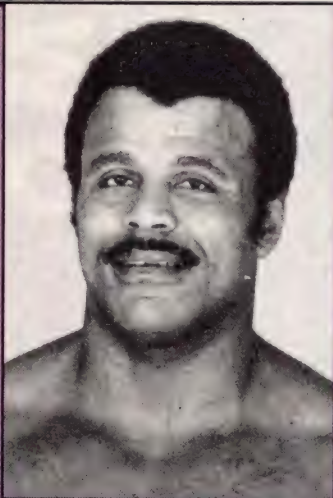
lot of his spare time parasailing and water skiing. And Lane has no plans to return to wrestling. "I'll do a few shows if they're for charity," he explained, "but I'm enjoying my new career to the fullest."



OX BAKER

Once one of the most vicious and dangerous men in the sport, Ox retired from active competition a few years ago and is now living in Connecticut with his wife, Peggy Ann, where he works in the plumbing supply business. He has also been training a few

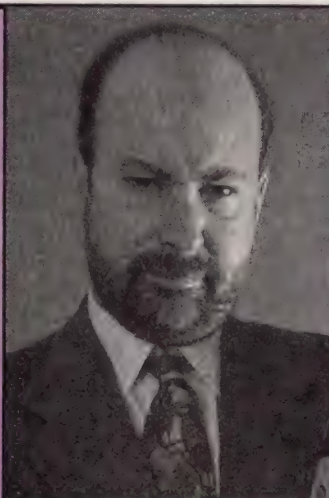
young wrestlers whom he hopes to bring to the WWF in the near future. "Yeah, one guy I've been working with is real big," Baker said. "He's from the Sudan. I think he could win every title out there."



ROCKY JOHNSON

The father of WWF Intercontinental champ Rocky Maivia now lives happily with his wife, Ata, in Florida, where he is involved in nationwide transport of beverages. "My only involvement in wrestling these days comes when I'm advising my son," Johnson said. What

he enjoys most about his job is the fact that it puts him in contact with many former fans. "You'd be surprised at how many people recognize me," he said. "And I haven't been seen on TV in years."



TOD GORDON

The former ECW commissioner, who left the federation after the infamous WCW mole scandal last year, is happy to be out of the business. "I still love ECW, but it is a huge weight off my shoulders," Gordon told us. "I set out to change the face of wres-

tling with ECW, and I think we did that with our product." Gordon recently married for a second time and still owns Carver W. Reed, a jewelry store in Philadelphia. He also continues to do charity work for the Variety Club.

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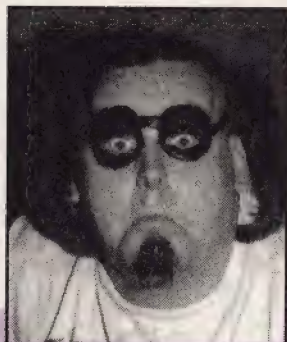
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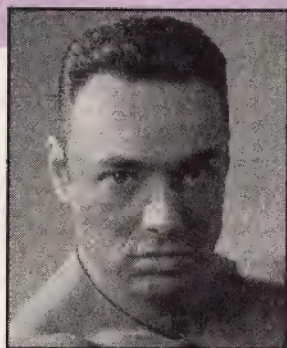
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NEWS FROM THE

WALTHAM, MA
BY ANGEL QUINONES



**THE BLUE MEANIE
VS.
JASON**



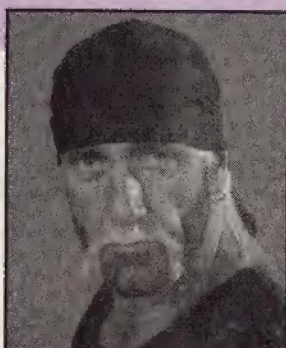
The Blue Meanie has been on a roll in ECW of late, and his hot streak continued here. Early on, Jason taunted Meanie, then attacked him from behind. Jason's advantage was short-lived, though, as Meanie blocked many of his moves, including a clothesline. Later, frustrated because he couldn't get a pin, Jason dropkicked Meanie's head as Meanie sat in the ring. Meanie gained the advantage, however, by ramming Jason's head into a turnbuckle. Later, after hitting Jason with a low blow, Meanie executed his "blue light special" stunner and got the win.

OTHER BOUTS: Jerry Lynn defeated Chris Chetti ... Justin Credible beat Spike Dudley ... Kronus beat Paul Diamond ... Al Snow pinned Roadkill ... Axl Rotten, B. Mahoney, & The Sandman beat Little Guido, Tracey Smothers, & Tommy Rich ... Chris Candido & Lance Storm defeated Buh Buh Ray & D-Von Dudley ... ECW TV champion Taz beat Rob Van Dam.

BOSTON, MA
BY ERIN DELANEY



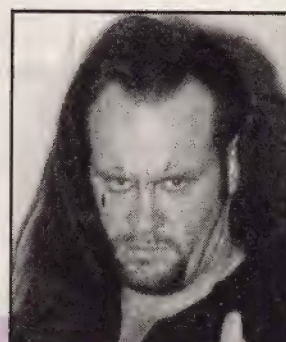
**STING
VS.
HULK HOGAN**



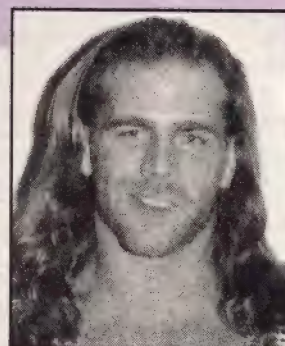
Sting defeated Hogan in a cage match in which he opened a large gash on "Hollywood's" forehead. Although the only way to win was by pinfall or submission, Hogan still tried to escape through the door. Sting went after him outside the ring, and they bounced each other off both a ring-side table and a steel barrier before returning to the ring. Finally, Randy Savage ran into the cage and attempted to hit Sting with a flying axehandle, but Sting moved and Savage nailed Hogan instead. Sting then easily pinned the dazed Hogan.

OTHER BOUTS: Bill Goldberg beat Buddy Lee Parker ... WCW TV champ Booker T beat Michael Wall Street ... WCW cruiserweight champ Chris Jericho beat Dean Malenko ... Steve McMichael beat Greg Valentine ... Rick & Scott Steiner beat Raven & Perry Saturn ... Chris Benoit beat Eddy Guerrero ... Bret Hart beat Ric Flair ... Lex Luger, Dallas Page, & Larry Zbyszko beat Kevin Nash, Scott Hall, & Randy Savage.

SAN JOSE, CA
BY CHRIS LORNE



**THE UNDERTAKER
VS.
SHAWN MICHAELS**

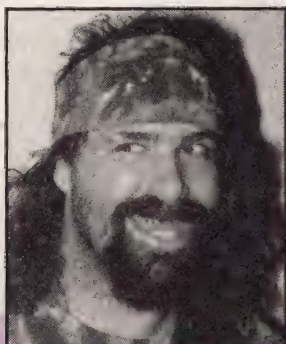


Michaels barely retained his WWF World title in this casket match, but he did so with the help of the rest of DeGeneration X, Los Boricuas, The New Age Outlaws, and Kane. Both men tried to dump each other in the casket early on, but neither could do it. The two battered each other equally until Shawn's crew hit the ring. 'Taker then choke-slammed Shawn into the casket and closed the lid, but Chyna had knocked the referee unconscious. That's when Kane came to ringside and choke-slammed 'Taker into the casket. The ref didn't see this, Shawn was ruled the winner.

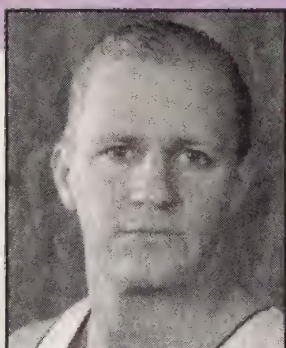
OTHER BOUTS: Vader pinned Goldust ... Mosaic, Max Mini, & Nova beat El Torito, Tarantula, & Battalion ... WWF Intercontinental champ Rocky Maivia beat Ken Shamrock by reverse decision ... The Road Warriors defeated World tag team champs The New Age Outlaws by disqualification ... Steve Austin won the Royal Rumble, last eliminating Rocky Maivia.

WRESTLING CAPITALS

**LAS VEGAS, NV
BY STEVE BARRON**



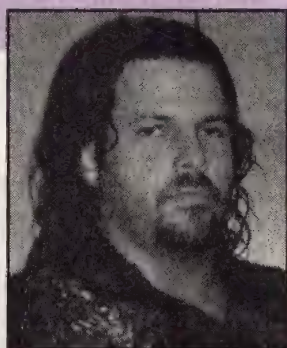
**DUDE LOVE
VS.
JEFF JARRETT**



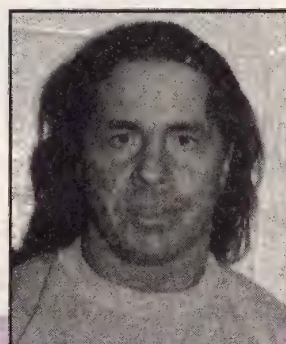
**ALEXANDRIA, VA
BY RON ALLAN**



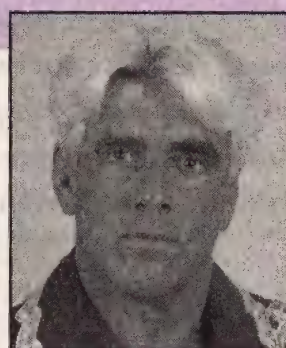
**JULIO SANCHEZ
VS.
LANCE DIAMOND**



**DAYTON, OH
BY AARON GETTY**



**BRET HART
VS.
RIC FLAIR**



Jarrett, the NWA North American champ, must be glad that he deemed this bout a non-title match, because at one point, Dude came close to winning. They spent most of the match toying with each other. Finally, Love hit Jarrett with a superkick, leveling the champ, but Jarrett got his foot on the bottom rope once Dude covered him. After Love broke the pin attempt, Jarrett rolled out of the ring and fled with the belt in hand. Dude had to settle for the countout victory.

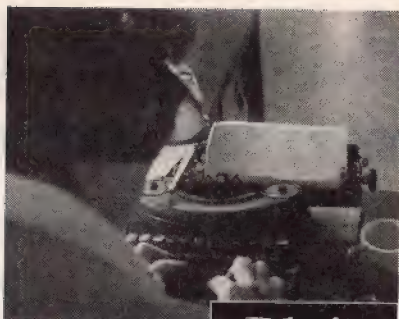
OTHER BOUTS: Skull & Eight-Ball defeated Savio Vega & Miguel Perez Jr. ... Tom Brandi beat Marc Mero ... WWF light heavyweight champ Taka Michinoku defeated Brian Christopher ... Kane beat Chainz ... Owen Hart & Ken Shamrock defeated Faarooq & Rocky Maivia ... Mosaic, Max Mini, & Nova beat El Torito, Tarantula, & Piratita Morgan ... The Road Warriors beat WWF World tag team champs The New Age Outlaws by disqualification.

Diamond had only his manager, Vinnie Gambini, to blame for his loss to IPWA light heavyweight champ Sanchez in this bout. The two men spent the entire match trading mat moves and suplexes. After Diamond executed his northern lights suplex, the champion was barely able to kick out of the pin attempt. Gambini tried to assure a win for Diamond by interfering, but when he attempted to hit Sanchez, Sanchez moved and Diamond was struck instead. Sanchez quickly rolled up his stunned opponent for the victory.

OTHER BOUTS: Drakko beat Shorty Smalls ... Knuckles Zandwich defeated Harvey Shaw ... Christian York defeated Mark Schrader ... Corporal Punishment beat Adam Flash ... Cueball Carmichael defeated Party Animal Ariolo ... Axl Rotten beat Knuckles Zandwich ... Jimmy Cicero defeated Don Rage ... Cueball Carmichael won a battle royal to win the vacant IPWA heavyweight title.

In a battle of leglocks, Bret Hart beat Ric Flair by submission to his "sharpshooter." Both men worked on each other's legs throughout the match, with Flair going for the figure-four several times and Hart applying his ringpost figure-four halfway through the match. After a series of chops by Flair, Bret rallied, locking Flair in the "sharpshooter" to get the win by submission.

OTHER BOUTS: Psicosis, La Parka, Silver King, & El Dandy defeated Chavo Guerrero Jr, Lizmark Jr., Juventud Guerrera, & Super Calo ... Chris Benoit beat Raven ... Chris Jericho defeated WCW cruiserweight champion Rey Mysterio Jr. to win the title ... WCW TV champion Booker T beat Rick Martel ... Larry Zbyszko (with Dusty Rhodes) defeated Scott Hall by disqualification ... Rick & Scott Steiner & Ray Traylor defeated Scott Norton, "Buff" Bagwell, & Konnan ... Kevin Nash pinned The Giant ... Lex Luger beat Randy Savage.



Matt Brock's **Plain** *Speaking*

Harder than nails, veteran wrestling reporter Matt Brock has logged more miles covering wrestling than any other journalist. Every month Matt will travel to the sport's hotbeds, reporting everything he sees without fear or favor

Shawn Michaels wrestles hard and trains hard, but the way things work in wrestling, you're supposed to get hurt in the ring while going head-to-head with a tough opponent, not in the training room, where all the conditions are on your side. Tough break for Michaels, who suffered two herniated

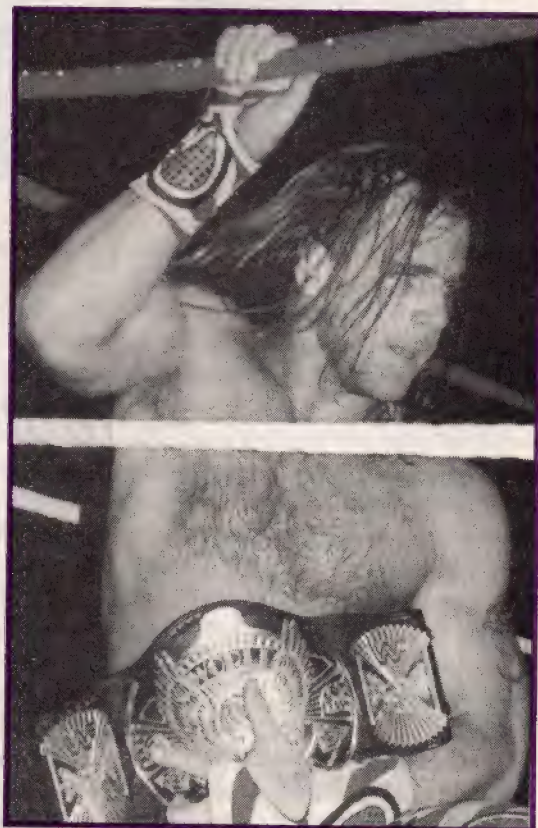
disks in his back while training near his home here. Michaels had to pull out of one WWF pay-per-view, and he had no idea about the others. Funny thing Buddy Rogers once told me about training, about how it's not really true that you get hurt during matches and not during training sessions. The way the original "Nature Boy" saw it, you went all-out all the time, no matter what, no matter where you were, and if you got hurt, you got hurt, but you got up, brushed yourself off, and moved on. Michaels would've tried to do that, expect a herniated disk isn't exactly like a bump or a bruise, and he had two, not one. Michaels is causing a lot of trouble these days for a lot of wrestlers, but more than anything else, his body is causing a lot of trouble for him. Reminds me of something else Rogers once said, about how these high-risk wrestlers like Michaels are taking big chances with their bodies and that wrestlers' careers won't last as long as they used to. Used to be men like Rogers, Thesz, Gagne, and Brower went into

their 50s, and you still get that with the Funks and a few others, but it's going to start happening less and less. Don't know whether that's good or bad.

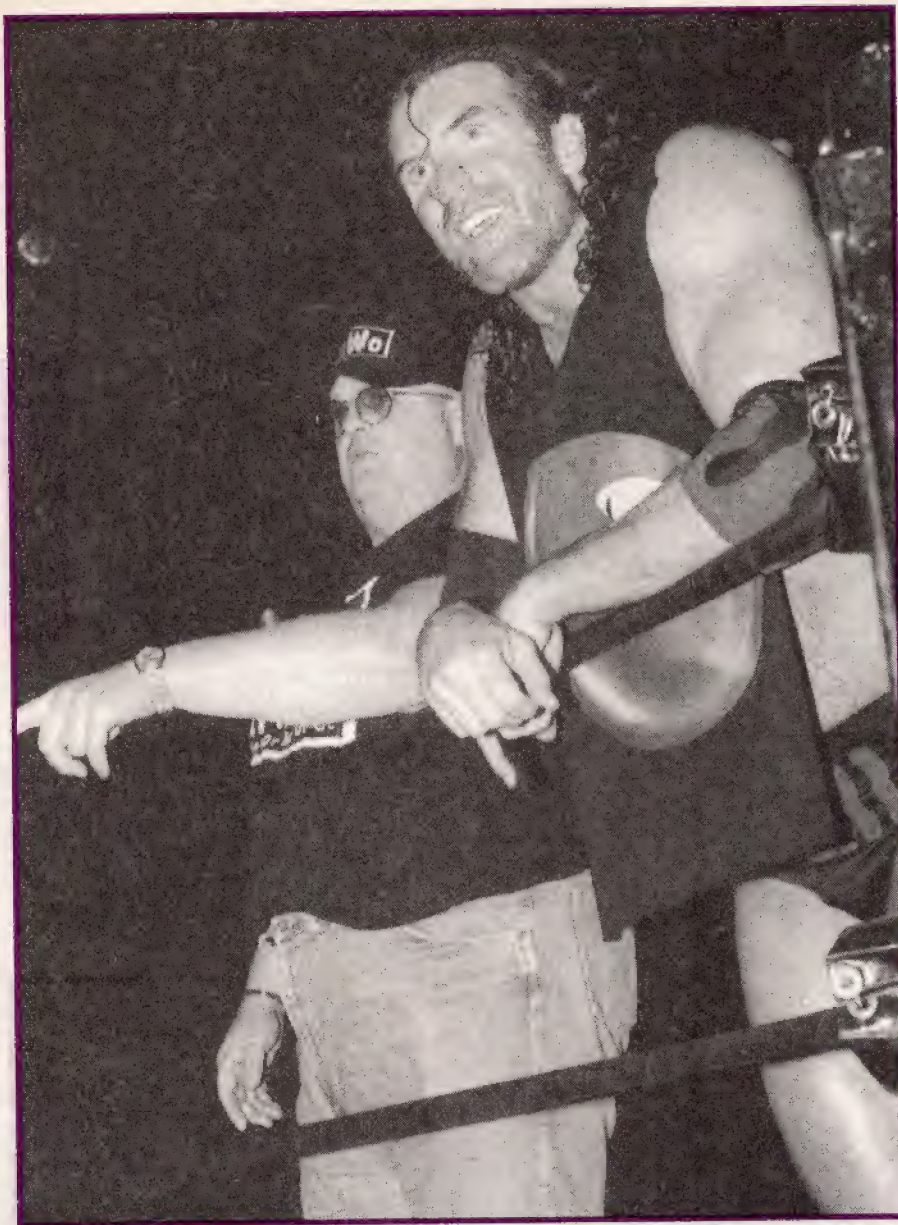
Wrestling used to be a sport, now it's an event, and a lot of the people who attend wrestling matches don't know what's going on. Take tonight, for instance. It's wrestling night at the Don Haskins Center and the place is packed to the gills, not just because Randy Savage is wrestling Hulk Hogan, but because it's *Nitro* night, and everybody wants to be seen on TV. They also got the Steiners vs. Nash and Hall, but you can bet your last dollar that if some TV camera showed up near one of the concession stands while a match was going on, a hundred fans would run over hoping for a chance to be seen on TV. The

SAN ANTONIO, TX

EL PASO, TX



SHAWN MICHAELS



RHODES & HALL

big news these days in WCW is that the NWO doesn't trust anyone and that Dusty Rhodes has joined the NWO just when it might be on its last legs. Always said this: Rhodes was much better at wrestling than he was at anything else he could've ever done in life, and that's as true now as it was 10 years ago. Rhodes was one of those lucky men who found his true calling early, and now he's trying to milk the golden goose dry. Saks might call that a mixed metaphor, but what does it matter? The fact is that Rhodes is trying

to keep his career going when it should've ended a long time ago. There has to be a mercy rule or something.

Ran into Dave Rosenbaum at the WWF card at Miami Arena and he told me that if I wanted to see some real action, I should walk outside the Arena, turn right, walk five blocks, and just watch. Figured I'd pass. Watched Rocky Maivia and Faarooq beat Ken Shamrock and Owen Hart and started to wonder just how

far good talent will get you in this world, because Hart is a lot more talented than anybody who showed up on this card, Shamrock's coming along nicely, and together they should have had no trouble beating Maivia and Faarooq, two men who don't even like each other. So maybe Rosenbaum was right. Maybe I should've stepped outside.

Sitting home watching the opening ceremonies for the Winter Olympics on my 14-inch Philco, which has been on the repair bench a half-dozen times over the past year, and couldn't believe it when they flashed a couple of sumo wrestlers on the screen. First of all, sumo wrestling isn't a Winter Olympics sport—don't even know if it's a Summer Olympics sport—and second of all, nobody in his right mind would have any use for sumo wrestlers anyway, because all they are is fat men trying to push each other out of a circle. What's wrong with this world? Professional wrestlers can't get themselves recognized unless Mike Tyson shoves Steve Austin, but a couple of fat sumo wrestlers get center stage at an international event. So now the whole world knows about sumo wrestlers and ice dancers and snowboarders whom nobody really needs to know about, but how many people know anything about Rey Misterio Jr. and Juventud Guerrera? Answer: Not nearly enough. Something's very wrong here, but sitting around in a dirty walkup in midtown Manhattan isn't the way to get some answers. Think I'll head over to Penn Station and grab myself a Nedicks and an orange soda. Don't think the doctor would approve, but who cares? □

NEW YORK, NY

MIAMI, FL

Perry Saturn's physical and mental strength amazed everyone last year as he overcame a knee injury that nearly ended his career. Today, however, he sits in a stupor as Raven gives the orders. What happened?

FOLLOWING THE

By Harry Burkett

ASTRONOMERS HAVE peered through telescopes for centuries trying to solve the mystery of Saturn's rings. Sure, Jupiter is a much larger planet, and Uranus is far more distant, but the oddity of Saturn has puzzled scientists for dozens of generations. Whether viewed from Galileo's observatory or by satellites controlled from Johnson Space Center, Saturn always provokes the scratching of heads and a slight fear of the unknown.

These thoughts come to mind when trying to figure out another Saturn: Perry Saturn. As a member of Raven's Flock, the former ECW star can often be seen at ringside with his comrades Van

Hammer, Billy Kidman, Scotty Riggs, Sick Boy, and Lodi.

A cog in a machine? One of the crowd? Since when does Perry Saturn fit this mold? Where is the self-motivated, self-sufficient Eliminator? How did he become just another faceless and thoughtless follower of Raven?

Wait a minute: Not so fast!

Could everyone be selling Saturn short? After all, he did manage to capture the WCW TV title from Disco Inferno after only a few weeks in the federation. But he held the belt for only a month before losing it back to Inferno ... then slinked back to the oblivious world of Raven and his flunkies. He didn't even mount a serious effort to regain the title.

Saturn's drive to thrive seemed to be thoroughly off-track.

"Although I didn't like some of the stunts he pulled during our match, I gained a lot of respect for Saturn when he beat me," Inferno said. "I saw the brace on his [left] knee, and I thought I could get a quick victory if I started working on it right away. But he never gave me a chance. He obviously mapped out a strategy that would keep me away from that knee. Believe me, Saturn isn't a washed-out superfreak. The guy uses his head when necessary. He's laying in wait for something. I just wish I could figure

Don't Even Try To Figure This Man Out!

SATURN PATTERN

Perry Saturn's mental focus is evident even as he chinlocks Chris Benoit, but it seems to be missing from his overall career direction these days.

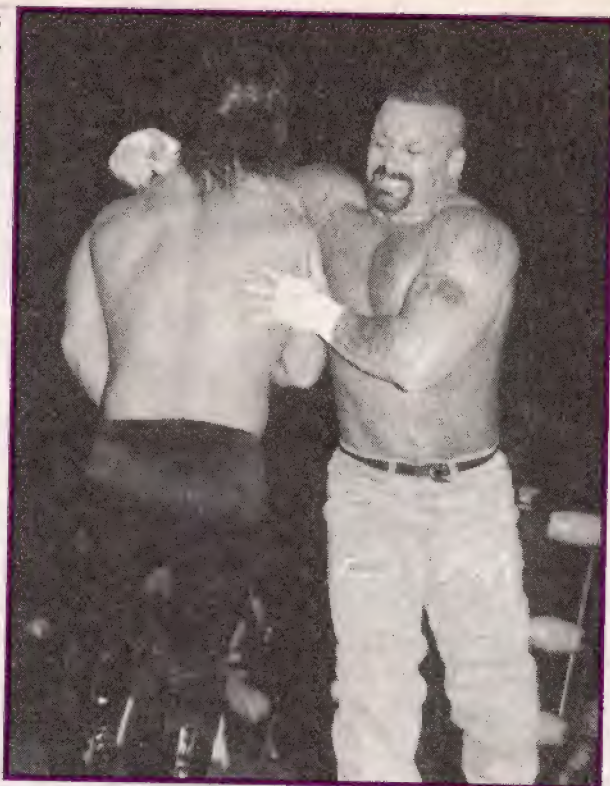
out his gig."

Saturn's evident apathy is disturbing, especially considering the fighting spirit he's demonstrated in the past. He and John Kronus—as The Eliminators—emerged from a volatile tag team division to become arguably the most dominant ECW champions in history. His downfall, however, came in May 1997 during a triangle match that pitted The Eliminators against the Dudleys and PG-13. New Jack interfered in the bout, then left an errant crutch on the canvas. As Saturn attempted a front kick on D-Von Dudley, he landed on the crutch with his plant leg, tearing the anterior cruciate and meniscus ligaments in addition to cracking his knee and tibia.

John Kronus successfully defended the tag title for another month before losing to Buh Buh Ray & D-Von Dudley. Saturn, meanwhile, began his long rehabilitation process. His physician, Dr. Sal Corso, predicted Saturn wouldn't be able to return for a year; he shocked everyone by debuting in WCW only four months later.

"Wow, is this fella from outer space or what?" WCW broadcaster Lee Marshall asked incredulously. "He rebounds from a potentially career-ending injury, enters a world-class league like WCW, and wins a major title within his first few weeks. Now he's sitting next to Raven, looking like a zombie. I just really don't get it. Here's a guy with proven ability—and his mind has turned to mush! Why does he owe *anything* to Raven?"

Good question. Although Saturn and Raven were contemporaries in ECW, neither man had much to do with the other. They rarely collaborated, but the two weren't on opposing sides, either. If Saturn didn't



Saturn's clothesline (here, against Benoit) packs furious power. His out-of-the-ring demeanor, however, packs lethargy under the direction of Raven.

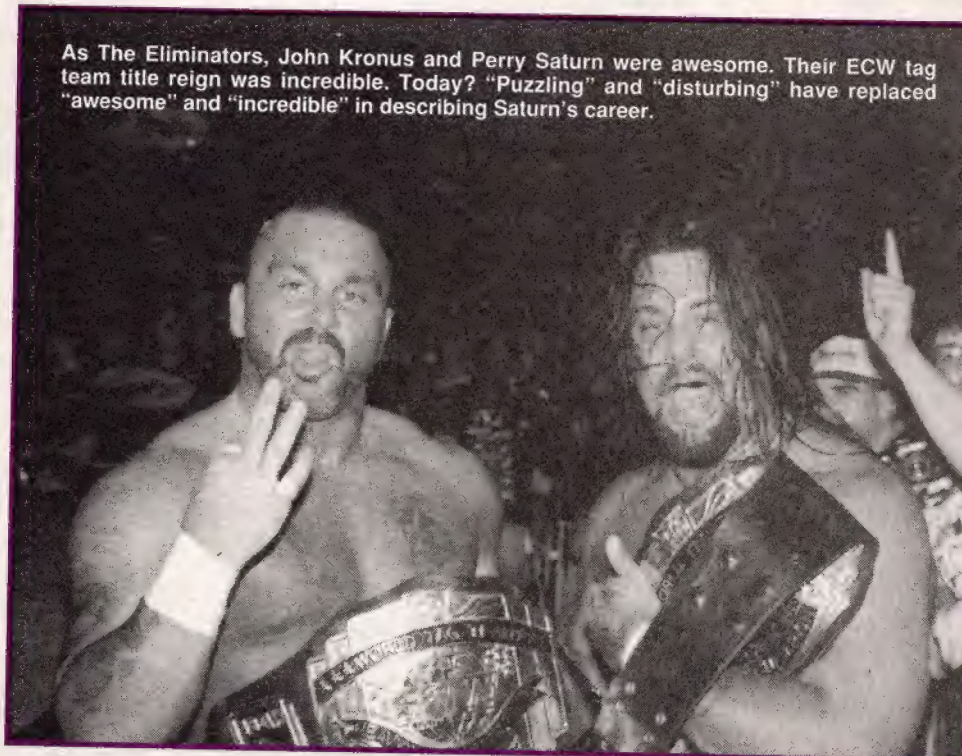
seek Raven's guidance in ECW, it's difficult to understand why he feels he needs him now.

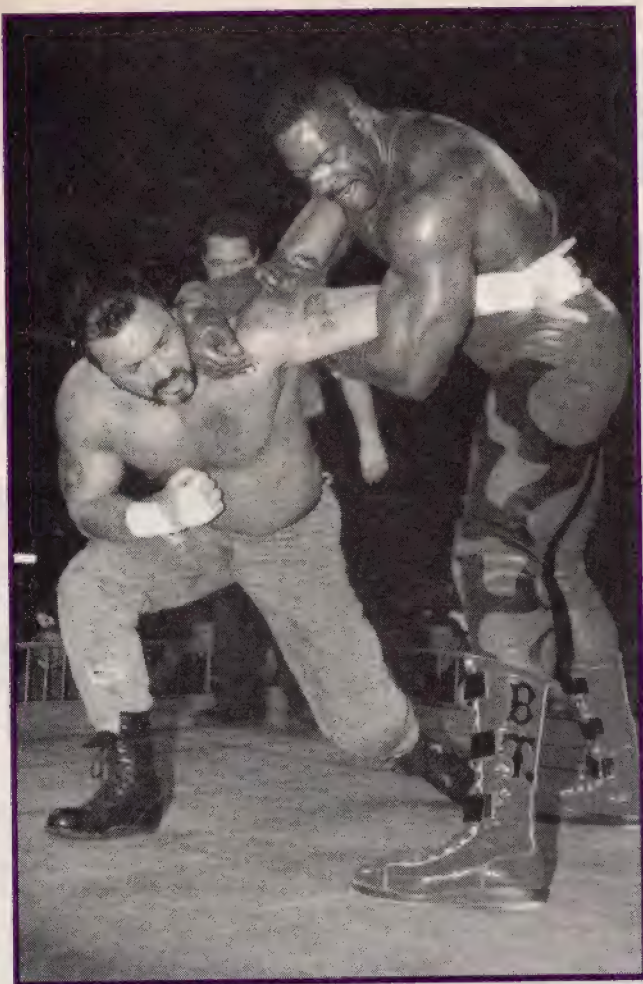
"Saturn is a lost soul who needs nurturing and moral support," claimed Raven.

"But we offer him no support, no friendship, and no assistance. The indestructible fall and the invincible are slain. Saturn wants to be admired like the heavenly bodies of the cosmos. It is all a fantasy. The Flock stretches reality to fantastic limits. We have healed the sparrow's wing by unveiling the majesty of life in all its misery."

This is guidance? Like Van Hammer, Sick Boy, Lodi, and the others, Saturn seems to have lost his will to succeed. His brutal intensity is unleashed only at the command of Raven. And that only happens

As The Eliminators, John Kronus and Perry Saturn were awesome. Their ECW tag team title reign was incredible. Today? "Puzzling" and "disturbing" have replaced "awesome" and "incredible" in describing Saturn's career.





In this match against Booker T, Saturn seemed to be lacking his characteristic intensity. Perhaps it's time he flew from Raven's coop.

in extreme circumstances and in measured amounts.

There is another scenario to consider. Saturn's relationship

with Raven may not be as cozy as it looks. He sits at ringside with the rest of the Flock only on occasion now. When Saturn is

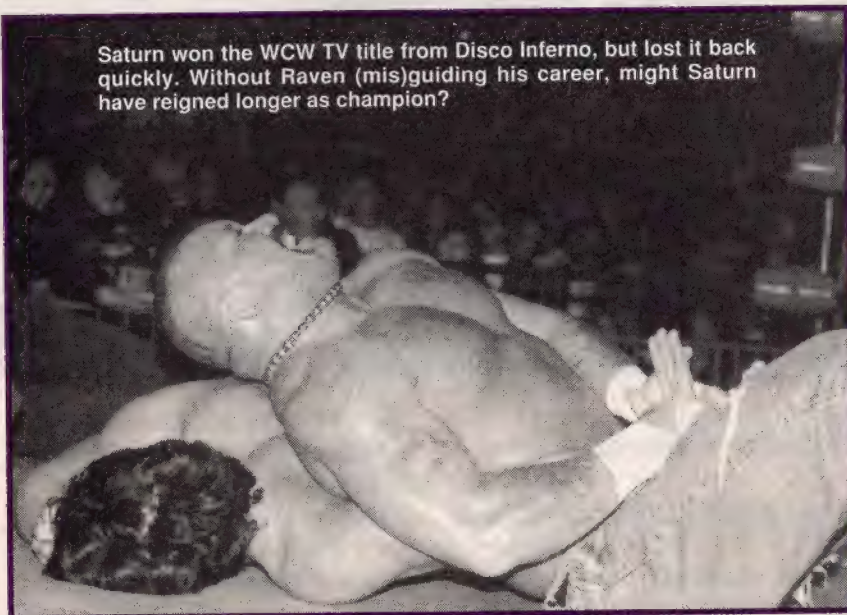
in attendance, he seems distracted and rarely converses with fellow members. Maybe he blames the Flock for his premature TV title loss. Perhaps he is simply biding time while his knee completely heals. Are Saturn and Raven already having problems?

"Doesn't matter," mumbled Saturn. "We've got a purpose, and we're fulfilling it: People are going down."

So much for shedding light on the subject. Saturn remains a riddle wrapped inside an enigma. He is either one of the most cunning individuals in the sport, or a minion with the willpower of silly putty.

Given Saturn's recent actions—and inactions—it's impossible to tell which alternative is the truth. □

Saturn won the WCW TV title from Disco Inferno, but lost it back quickly. Without Raven (mis)guiding his career, might Saturn have reigned longer as champion?



THE RHODES

DUSTY AND DUSTIN'S

PATHS TO

Dusty and Dustin built a family tradition of excellence on the cheers of the fans (below), but with Dusty in the NWO (left) and Dustin aligned with Luna Vachon (opposite page, far right), that tradition is all but destroyed.



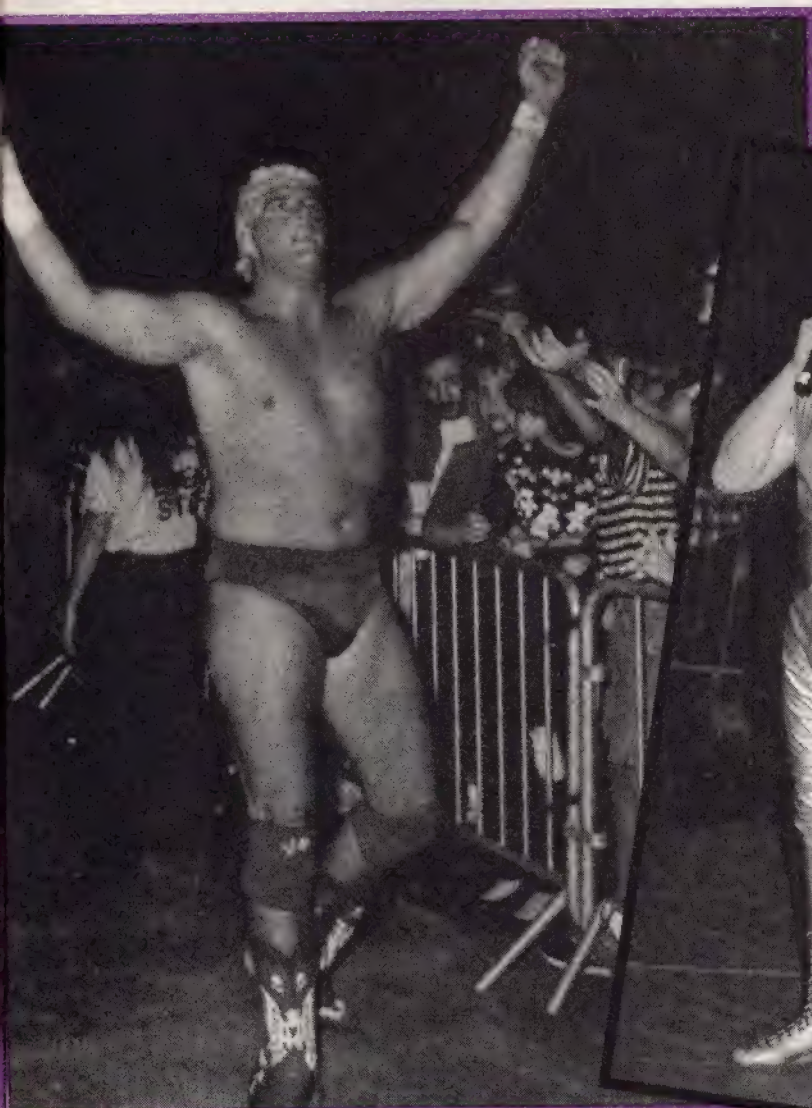
By Steve Anderson

WHEN DUSTIN RHODES left WCW to become Goldust in the WWF, fans and friends were confused by

the move. Why would a rising second-generation star forsake both his past as a fan favorite and his present as a traditional wrestler to don a garish wig and makeup and employ a less-than-sportsmanlike style?

TO RUIN: SEPARATE DESTRUCTION

Dustin and Dusty Rhodes had taken separate paths to success, paths that were steeped in tradition. Now, rather than embracing tradition, both are abandoning it—and the very legacy of the Rhodes name is at risk!



Meanwhile, "The American Dream" Dusty Rhodes remained in WCW. He continued to serve in a front-office position and as a color commentator. While he expressed his views honestly and openly on television, the subject

of his son caused him to be uncharacteristically tight-lipped. He offered only brief words of general support for his son's bold career move.

Eventually, Goldust toned down the bizarre actions. Re-

vealing his "true identity," he established himself as a fan favorite and family man. The road back to Dustin Rhodes was not as long as everyone had anticipated it might be. Slowly, the second-generation star was emerging from his lavish cocoon.

fortune, while his offspring is embarrassing himself with ridiculous costumes and histrionics that may force the WWF to put a parental warning on all of their shows.

How could a legacy so strong be so torn asunder?

For an answer, **INSIDE WRESTLING** turned to noted wrestling psychologist Dr. Sidney M. Basil, who has filled an entire file cabinet on Goldust and his dysfunctional relationships.

"When Dustin turned good, he realized that the grass wasn't necessarily greener," Basil said. "As the rulebreaking Goldust, he found fame and two Intercon-

tinental titles. Turning good brought him newfound friends and family, but little attention—and even less success."

The Rhodes legacy has been built on tradition, but a hunger for the spotlight of attention has been an important element as well. As "The American Dream," Dusty carved out his niche as a flamboyant, jive-talking superstar who could wrestle as well as he could strut. With his style and multiple world titles, Dusty owned the spotlight for the lion's share of his career. He wouldn't have it any other way.

But that spotlight on daddy Rhodes cast a long shadow over offspring Rhodes. When Dustin broke into the sport, the fanfare was muted due to the magnitude of his father's career. Any success Dustin achieved was either

The Artist Formerly Known as Goldust pummels Vader in a match that certainly will not add to the legacy formerly known as Rhodes.



Or so we thought.

When Luna Vachon entered his line of vision, Dustin lost sight of everything, including friends, family, and his career. Goldust was back and more bizarre than ever.

Strangely enough, and even more disturbing, Dusty would soon follow suit.

Just like his son before him, Dusty Rhodes took his legacy and all that he stood for and trashed it by aligning himself with the admittedly anti-traditional New World Order.

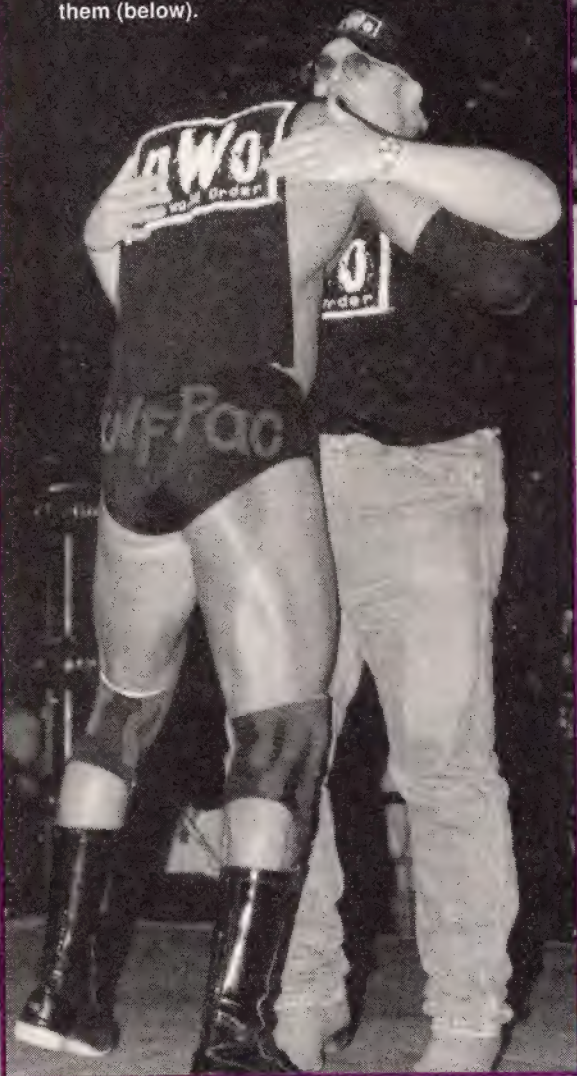
Two paths, once divergent, now run parallel. And the results could not be any more tragic, especially when it comes to the legacy of the Rhodes family. The elder Rhodes is betraying the sport in which he found fame and



compared to or credited to his father. Change was in the air when he bolted for the WWF, but Dustin wanted *complete* change. So the curtain rose on Goldust.

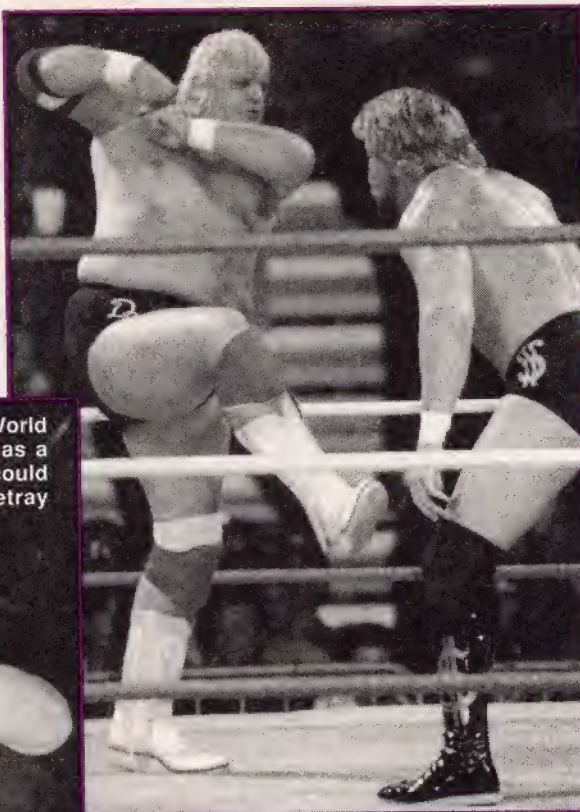
Meanwhile, Dusty saw his role in WCW diminish significantly. While fully retired from wrestling, Dusty kept active as a color commentator and front-office person. But champions and active wres-

When WCW welcomed three-time NWA World champion Dusty Rhodes into its ranks as a broadcaster (opposite page, left), they could hardly have imagined how he would betray them (below).



tlers, not broadcasters, get the attention of fans and media.

As Dusty hungered for the attention he couldn't have, he also witnessed firsthand the growth of the New World Order. He saw the fans change and root



Dusty in fine ring style against Ted DiBiase in 1989. From his perspective as a former member of the NWO, DiBiase can't believe what Dusty has done!

for the bad guys. The definition of tradition, in his mind, was changing.

"Change is the common thread that runs through these two careers," commented Dr. Basil. "Both saw careers the spotlight moving away from them and decided to do something drastic. Dustin did it with gold facepaint; Dusty did it with a black and white T-shirt."

They operate separately and rarely communicate, but the two are singular in purpose, whether intentionally or inadvertently. Whether it's Dustin in a baby diaper or Dusty flashing the "for life" sign, the Rhodes family is moving down a road that does not promise a dead-end, but a cliff. Both men's careers could fall into a deep,

dark abyss from which they would never be heard again.

"Everyone said that I betrayed tradition," said Rhodes, "but WCW wouldn't know tradition if it spit in its face. Don't worry about my great legacy—or my son's, for that matter. I'm not worried about my place in history."

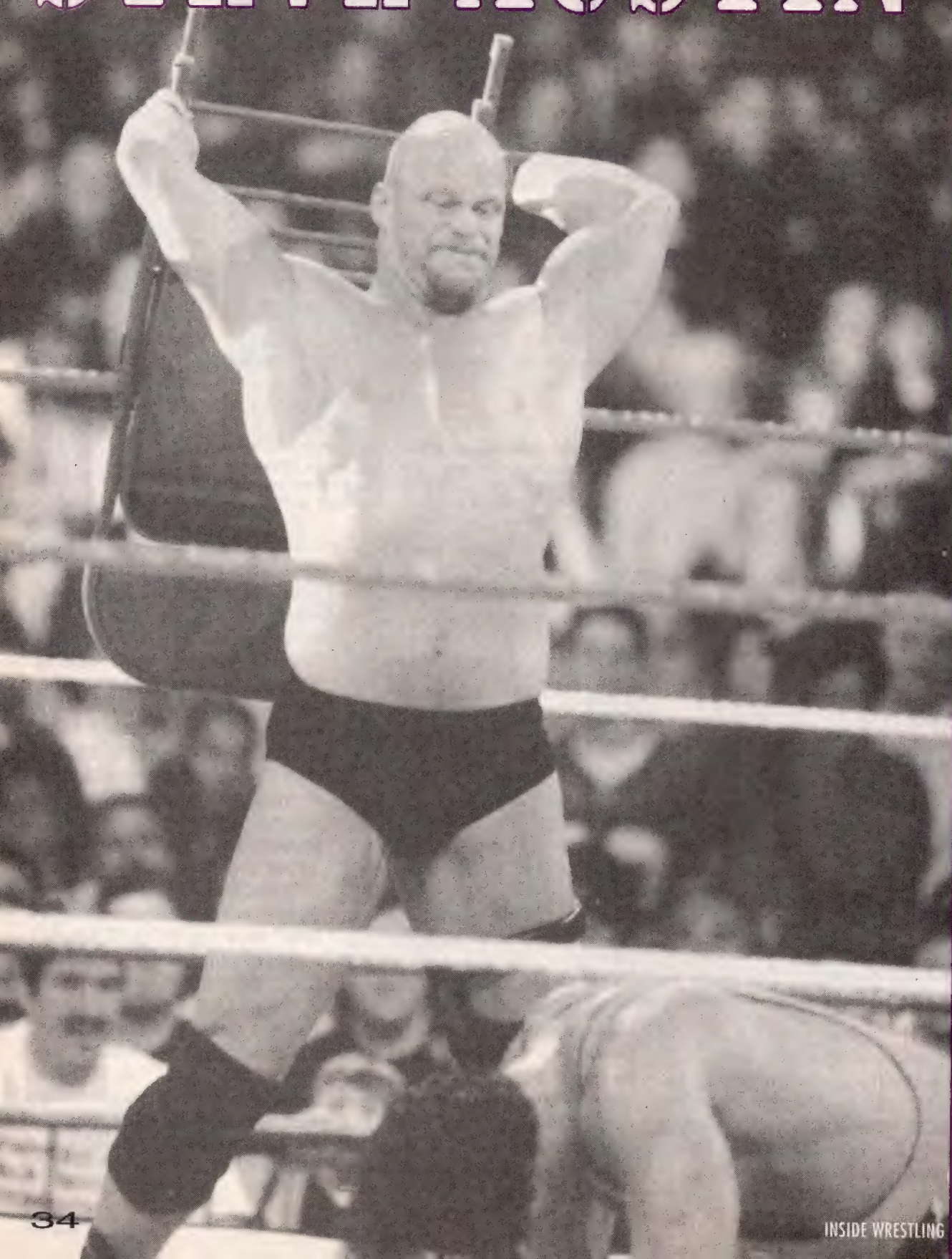
"Goldust does what Goldust wants. Period. End of story," the bizarre "artist" said. "I am in no man's shadow and carry no legacy. The day Goldust was born was the rebirth of my glorious career. The past has passed. The future is whatever is meant to be."

Direct words from both members of the Rhodes family, sad words that forsake all they have built since the 1960s when Dusty Rhodes first started wrestling. Yes, Dusty began as a rule-breaker, but it was youth and ego that guided his career then. Dustin's first dalliance to the dark side was quickly forgotten when he returned to the side of his family. Now all they've accomplished is but a distant memory, all but forgotten.

"This is what fans will unfortunately remember about these two," said Dr. Basil. "Dramatic actions have an impact on how history treats a professional wrestler. Dustin Rhodes will not be able to escape Goldust, just as Dusty will not be able to escape the NWO."

Tragically, they may not want that. The road they walk together is not paved with tradition, but destruction. □

STEVE AUSTIN



The 10 Men Who Inspired His Toughness

“S **“STONE-COLD” STEVE** Austin considers himself the toughest man in wrestling. So do many of his opponents, although you probably won't be able to find a single one who would admit it.

After all, how many wrestlers would have the guts to drive a truck to ringside? How many wrestlers would insist something is the truth just because “Stone-Cold” said so?”

But his toughness didn't come out of nowhere, and he certainly didn't learn it. Being tough was a part of Austin from the day he was born. But somebody had to bring it out. Somebody had to inspire him to dig down deep and discover this attitude.

In Austin's case, there were 10 somebodies, and each one made his own special contribution to the man who is “Stone-Cold.”

BRUISER BRODY

One of the toughest men in wrestling history, the late Bruiser Brody was a brawler without equal. Austin, a native Texan, grew up watching and admiring Brody, who wrestled a lot in that state. If you

Bruiser Brody's influence on Austin is unmistakable (opposite page, left). Brody was a wrestling role model for Austin, who grew up admiring the late madman's style (below).



were a kid from Texas in the 1970s and '80s, and you wanted to be a tough guy wrestler, Brody was the man you watched.

"He was like Texas—big and tough and proud and nobody could step on him," Austin said. "It didn't matter who they put in there, Bruiser Brody whipped his [butt] every time. He never feared nobody."



"Stone-Cold" identifies with James Dean's rebel image. Dean's aura of unpredictability appeals to Austin, who has surprised quite a few people with his "Stone-Cold stunner."

JAMES DEAN

The rebel without a cause (who of course starred in a movie with that title) and 1950s movie pinup boy is a legendary figure of toughness. It's the look—white T-shirt, blue jeans, and black leather jacket—and the attitude, too.

"Yeah, I know he was only an actor, but there was a part of him that wasn't acting," Austin said. "The whole damn rebel thing. Yeah, I'm a rebel, just like James Dean, because people look at us and they know something's going on. He was a proud man, and you can be damn sure I am, too."

DICK BUTKUS

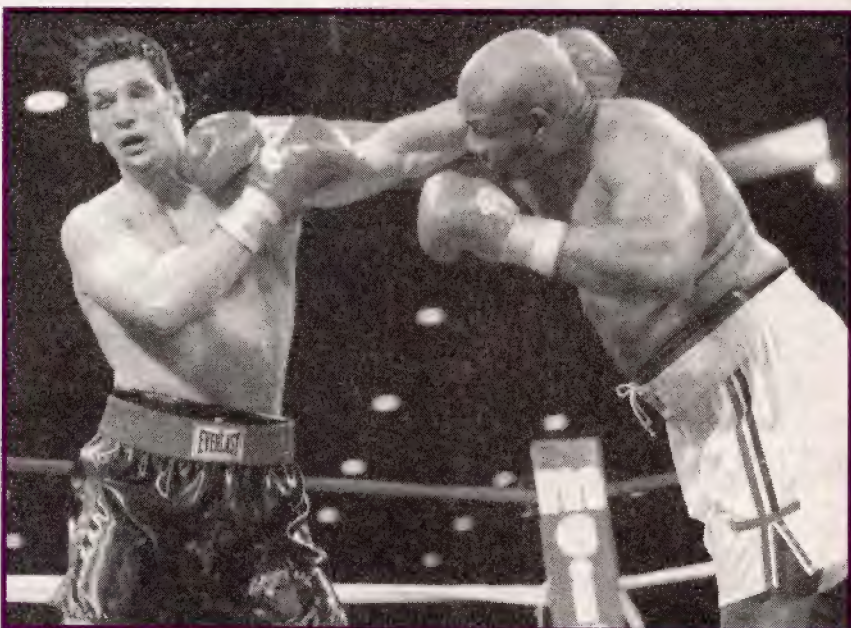
We don't hear much about

Butkus anymore, but during the 1960s, his name was synonymous with toughness. The Chicago Bears linebacker even had a tough-sounding name—as in kicking Butkus—and he not only played tough, he looked tough.

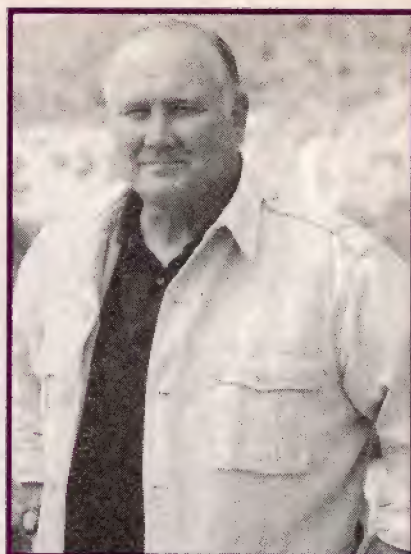
"Dick Butkus did things with his own two hands and didn't give in to nobody, no matter how tough they looked or acted," Austin said. "He didn't care if he hurt you. All he cared about was winning. Nobody got around Butkus or got through Butkus and you know why? Because Dick Butkus didn't want them to. And that's the bottom line."

GEORGE FOREMAN

"People laugh at George Foreman because of his weight, but you tell me how many men his age would have the guts to come out of retirement and not only step into the ring with professional boxers, but whip people half his age," Austin said admiringly. "Yeah, he talks about his weight and his age, but it's all an act, because when you get right down to it, the only thing that matters is big George's toughness. He did something he wanted to do and he didn't care about nobody."



Austin admired the way George Foreman defied the odds to rekindle his career. Austin, too, takes pleasure in showing up his detractors by continuing to beat the best the WWF has to offer.



Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf and Steve Austin share the same philosophy when it comes to setting out to accomplish a mission: They look to achieve decisive and thorough success quickly and convincingly.

GEN. NORMAN SCHWARZKOPF

America's hero in the Persian Gulf War went into Iraq and got the job done. Quickly and efficiently.

"He didn't waste any damn time at all," Austin said. "There was no negotiating, no messing around, no stepping lightly. He just went in there and kicked [butt], then got the hell out. That's what it's all

about. It's real simple. If you're gonna do a job, just do it. Otherwise, get the hell out of the way and let somebody else get the job done."

CLINT EASTWOOD

Getting the picture? Austin was one of those kids who connected with the people he saw on the silver screen. Clint Eastwood. The whole Dirty Harry character. "Go ahead, make my day," he challenged the man who was about to shoot him.

"Go ahead, make my day," was the greatest challenge ever made," Austin said. "It's all about defiance, son. You gotta do things your own way, and if people got a problem with it, let 'em do something about it."

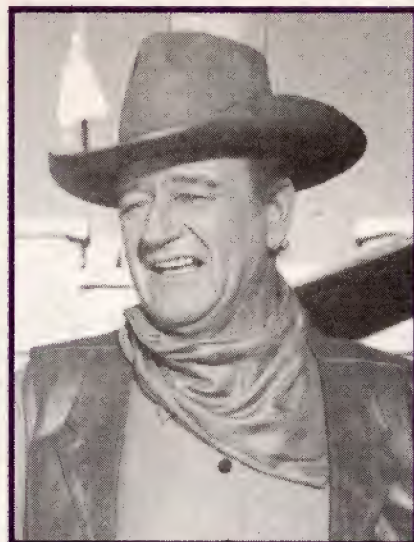
JOHN WAYNE

Yeah, another movie star. Yeah, another legend from yesteryear. But Wayne lives on through his movies, and so does his attitude.

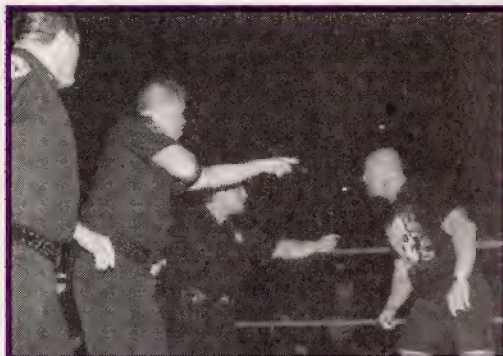
"He didn't say much," Austin said. "His actions spoke louder than his words. And once he opened his mouth, you knew he meant business. There ain't one damn wrestler in the whole WWF who doesn't know that when 'Stone-Cold' opens his mouth, they better listen to what I'm sayin'."

BILLY MARTIN

The former baseball manager who won the World Series and kept getting fired by New York Yankees owner George Steinbrenner. Martin, who died in a car accident, was famous for this quote concerning



In his movies, John Wayne always let his actions speak for themselves. Although Austin talks more than "The Duke," he is just as willing to back up his words with his fists.



Austin has had his brushes with the law (left). Legends like Fritz Von Erich (below) and Dick the Bruiser also inspired a strong security presence whenever they wrestled. Austin basks in the similarities.



outfielder Reggie Jackson and Steinbrenner: "They deserve each other. One's a born liar and the other's a convicted liar."

"He didn't get along with his boss, but it didn't matter, because his boss needed him more than he needed his boss," Austin said. "He played his cards and won. He looked the man in the eye and made him blink. That's what 'Stone-Cold' is about, too. Am I gonna do things the way I want to? Hell, yeah! And if McMahon don't like it, well I really don't give a damn."

DICK THE BRUISER & FRITZ VON ERICH

Legendary wrestling tough guys who were rarely beaten. Both names are synonymous with ring toughness, and Austin likes to think he has a little of both men inside of him.

"You're talking about men who lived life tough and rough and didn't care about anything but kicking [butt]," Austin said. "They walked into the ring and people instantly feared them. They'd walk into a bar and stools would clear off. That's what Steve Austin is all about. And you know why?"

Yeah, we know.

Because "Stone-Cold" said so. □

MORTALS



The Skulls To Mystify...

The Skills To Terrify

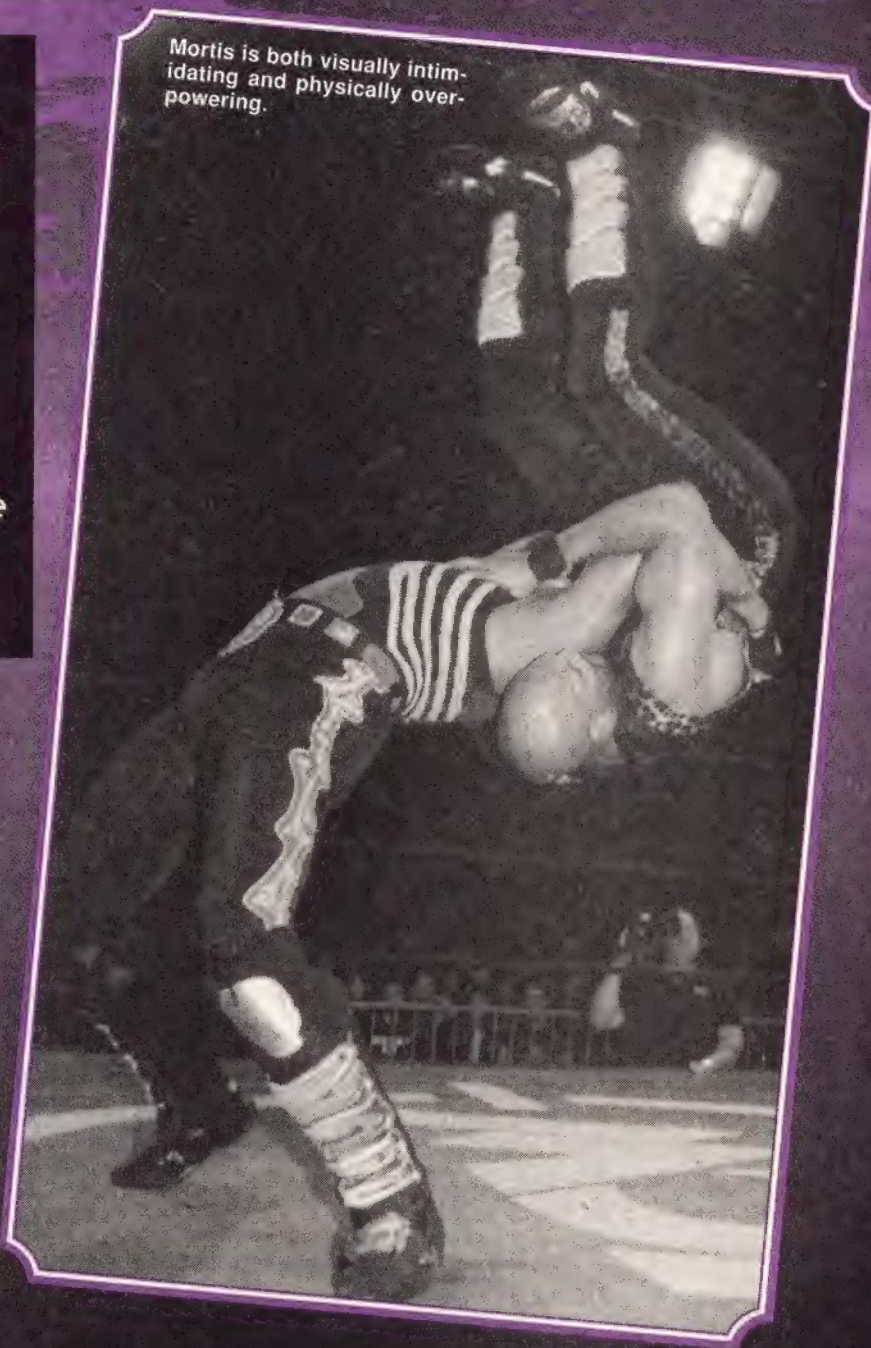
The frightening aura that surrounds Mortis is usually enough to send foes into a panic. If opponents think that's intimidating, though, they should examine Mortis' actual ring ability. Then they'd have a *real* reason to be afraid!

By Harry Burkett

JAMES VANDENBERG, standing backstage at a recent WCW card, plunged his hands into his pockets and giggled with anticipation. His face seemed to give off a fluorescent glow as he gazed down the runway leading to the ring. Vandenberg's charge, Mortis, was scheduled to wrestle in the next match—and the maniacal manager was very confident.

"My plan is proceeding magnificently," he gloated, a smirk creeping across his lips. "My stable has been laying dormant, taking note of everyone's

Mortis is both visually intimidating and physically overpowering.



strengths and weaknesses. Right now, we are deciding who we will allow to survive—and who we will destroy. The time is getting ripe. *Ha ha ha!* Yes, this is the eve of destruction. The forces of James Vandenberg are about to unleash an onslaught of violence the likes of which have never before been seen in this sphere!"

Wrestlers and WCW employees have already grown accustomed to Vandenberg's self-induced tirades in the dressing room area. Most of them have a nickname for him: "Mr. Spookyface." His outburst caused those

in earshot to shake their heads or, at the most, stifle a snicker.

Mortis, who was at Vandenberg's side, offered no response. He stood with his arms folded and his eyes staring ahead.

Vandenberg's grandiose plans are usually more delusional than realistic. In fact, Vandenberg's "forces" consist mainly of one man: Mortis. Mortis' partner, Wrath, suffered a fractured collarbone and a bruised sternum in a car accident just outside Atlanta on December 13 and he has only recently returned to action.

Mortis has carried Vandenberg's "empire" solely on his powerful shoulders for the past couple months, and he has done so quite successfully.

Soon it was time for Mortis to make his ring entrance. Hauntingly macabre strains of sound filtered through the arena. The eerie light show, with its weird blend of greens and

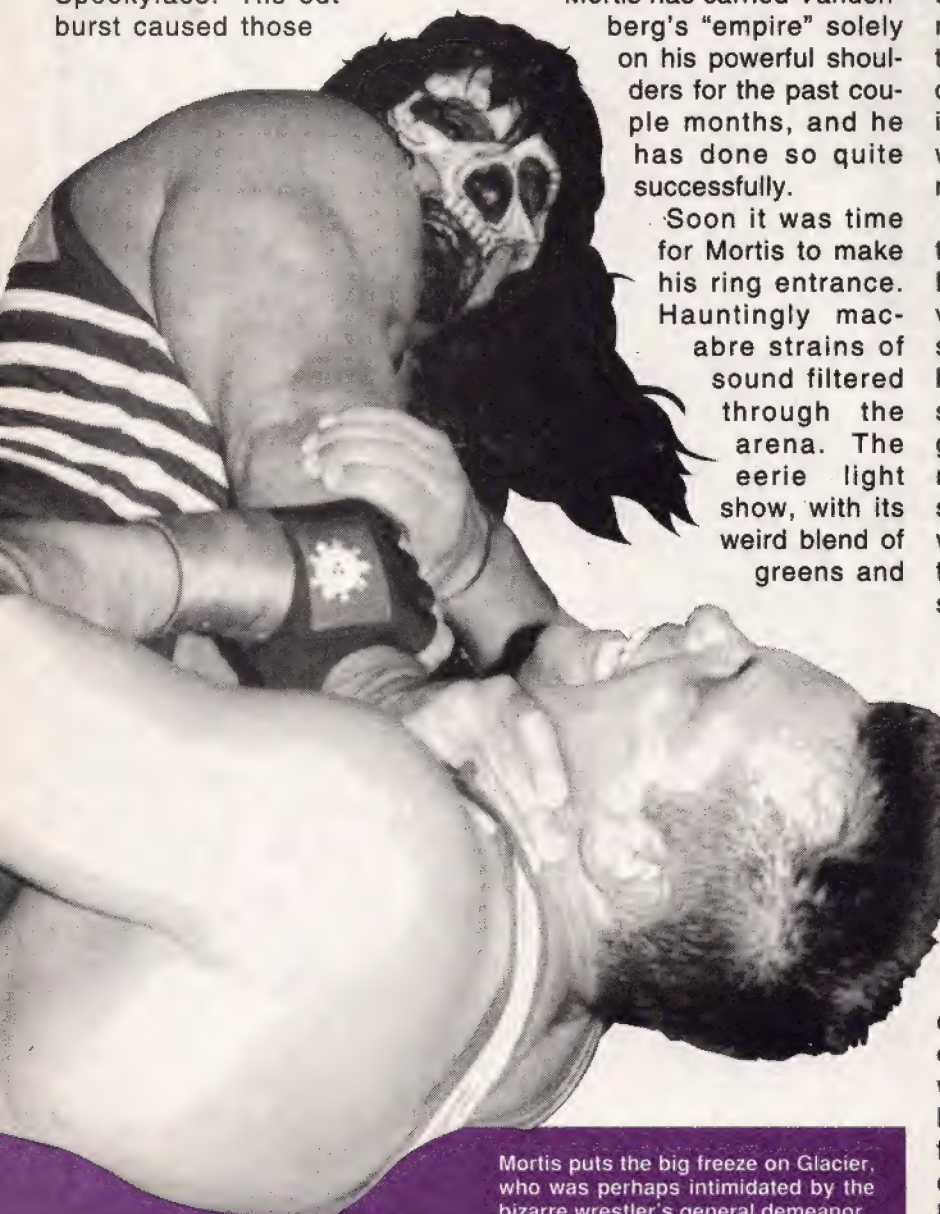
purples, silenced the capacity crowd. Vandenberg motioned for Mortis to follow him down the runway.

After witnessing this spectacle, it's easy to understand why Mortis is one of the most intimidating stars in WCW. The music and lights give him a fearsome aura. His hideous face mask depicts gruesome skeletal features and large, jagged teeth. Mortis' piercing dark eyes give life to the morbid image. A long cape, decorated with small, gruesome skulls, flows to the floor. Whether those are authentic skulls culled from the remains of headshrinking victims or merely plastic replicas, it doesn't really matter. The effect is the same: No one knows where the monster ends and the man begins.

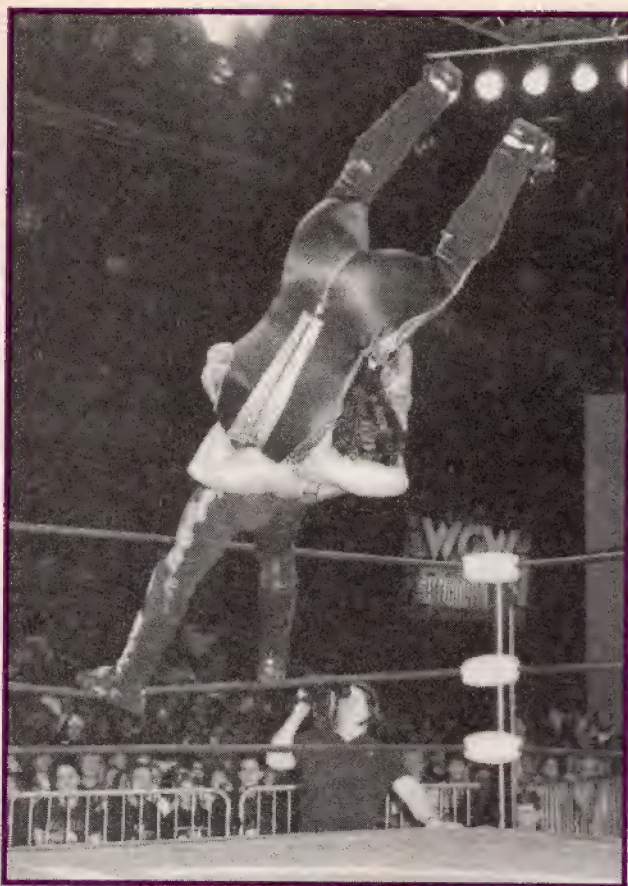
"When I see a man like Mortis, I see a tormented soul," said Larry Zbyszko. "Here's an individual who looks as if he just stepped out of *Halloween 5*, yet he has the skills to transcend the spookiness, the ghouls, and the goblins. The mask and skulls might be a form of self-expression, who knows? But it's a great way to intimidate his foes, and that, in itself, makes it a great strategy.

"I've seen it countless times. As soon as the bell rings, Mortis just stares at his opponent. The poor guy he's facing doesn't know what to do. Does he want to actually *touch* this creep, or should he just wait for Mortis to make the first move? Mortis always takes advantage of those slight moments of indecision."

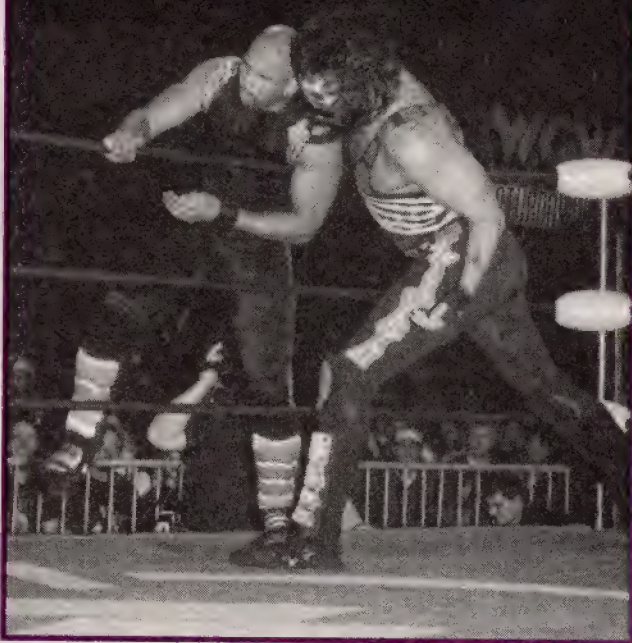
On this night, Mortis easily defeated a young, inexperienced opponent. He took control early with vicious chops and high kicks. At 6'3", Mortis' lanky frame allows him to execute dropkicks, lariats, and clotheslines from the top rope with relative ease. And at 270 pounds,



Mortis puts the big freeze on Glacier, who was perhaps intimidated by the bizarre wrestler's general demeanor.



Ernest Miller has beaten Mortis in the past, but he's also experienced firsthand the incredible power and skills of this unusual grappler (left and below). "Ignore the monster," Miller suggests, "and deal with the man."



Mortis has plenty of bulk and muscle to put substantial power behind his moves. His training in the martial arts and his mastery of traditional holds and maneu-

vers made it impossible on this night for his opponent to mount a counterattack. Like most of Mortis' opponents, this young man spent too much time trying to understand his psyche, instead of assessing his basic style.

Is it possible to defeat Mortis? Ernest Miller is one of the few men who have done just that. To do so, though, he had to look beyond Mortis' creepy veneer.

"As a person with almost no wrestling experience, I found it very difficult to beat Mortis," Miller said. "Yet I represented a challenge that Mortis had never faced before. My martial arts background gave me the ability to concentrate on Mortis the

man, not Mortis the monster. Sure, he's twisted and demented. And yeah, most people don't have skulls attached to their clothes. But underneath all that is a man made of flesh and bones, just like the rest of us. I won by ignoring the intimidation and beating him at his own game. He wasn't ready for that."

Mortis must come to terms with this dilemma. Should he stay on his current course, as a component in Vandenberg's bizarre quest to mold WCW into his own image? Or should he shed the skull and crossbones that might be poisoning his career?

Odds are, the answer lies somewhere in between. Perhaps it's time for him to dump Vandenberg and go solo. Mortis' intimidation tactics have served him well so far, but only his ability can take him to the next level.

After all, it is the man beneath the mask everyone should fear. □



"Diamond" Dallas Page might fare better against Mortis if he could allow himself to concentrate solely on Mortis' skills, not his intimidation tactics.

HOTSEAT

JEFF JARRETT

"BEING AN NWA CHAMPION IS THE PINNACLE OF MY CAREER!"

TWO YEARS AGO, Jeff Jarrett left the WWF to wrestle in WCW, a promotion that traces its World title lineage back to the days of the old NWA. Last fall, Jarrett blasted WCW, returned to the WWF, and quickly allied himself with Jim Cornette, who was forming a contingent of wrestlers representing the NWA in the WWF.

Confused? You should be. Following Jarrett's post-USWA career has not been an easy task for anyone.

During his first WWF stint, Jarrett put his splendid scientific skills on the back burner and began to fancy himself a brawling country singer. Jarrett's change in attitude and ring style won him a pair of WWF Intercontinental titles, but ultimately cost him much of the respect he had built up among both fans and peers alike.

Jarrett fled the WWF before too long and joined WCW. It was thought that, as a disgruntled former WWF star, Jarrett would ease right in to the NWO, but that was not to be. The second-generation star took offense to "Hollywood" Hogan's claims that he had single-handedly built pro wrestling, and allied himself with another NWO enemy, Ric Flair. Flair took a liking to Jarrett and made him an "unoffi-

cial Horseman," a move that didn't sit well with fellow Horsemen Chris Benoit and especially Steve McMichael.

After aligning himself with Debra McMichael, Jarrett defeated Dean Malenko for the U.S. heavyweight title. McMichael took the strap back from the former "Double-J," who then returned to the WWF.

Now Jarrett is the NWA North American champion, and has recruited NWA tag team champions The Rock 'n' Roll Express and former NWA World champion Barry Windham to watch his back.

INSIDE WRESTLING sent Contributing Writer Dan Murphy to meet with the NWA titleholder amidst all the confusion—and to try to find out what's next in Jarrett's unpredictable career.

"The fact that people are watching ECW and calling that 'wrestling' is atrocious."

Q: First of all, congratulations on winning the NWA North American title, Jeff. However, I'm still a little confused about what that title represents.

A: This title belt stands for the same thing I do. That's tradi-

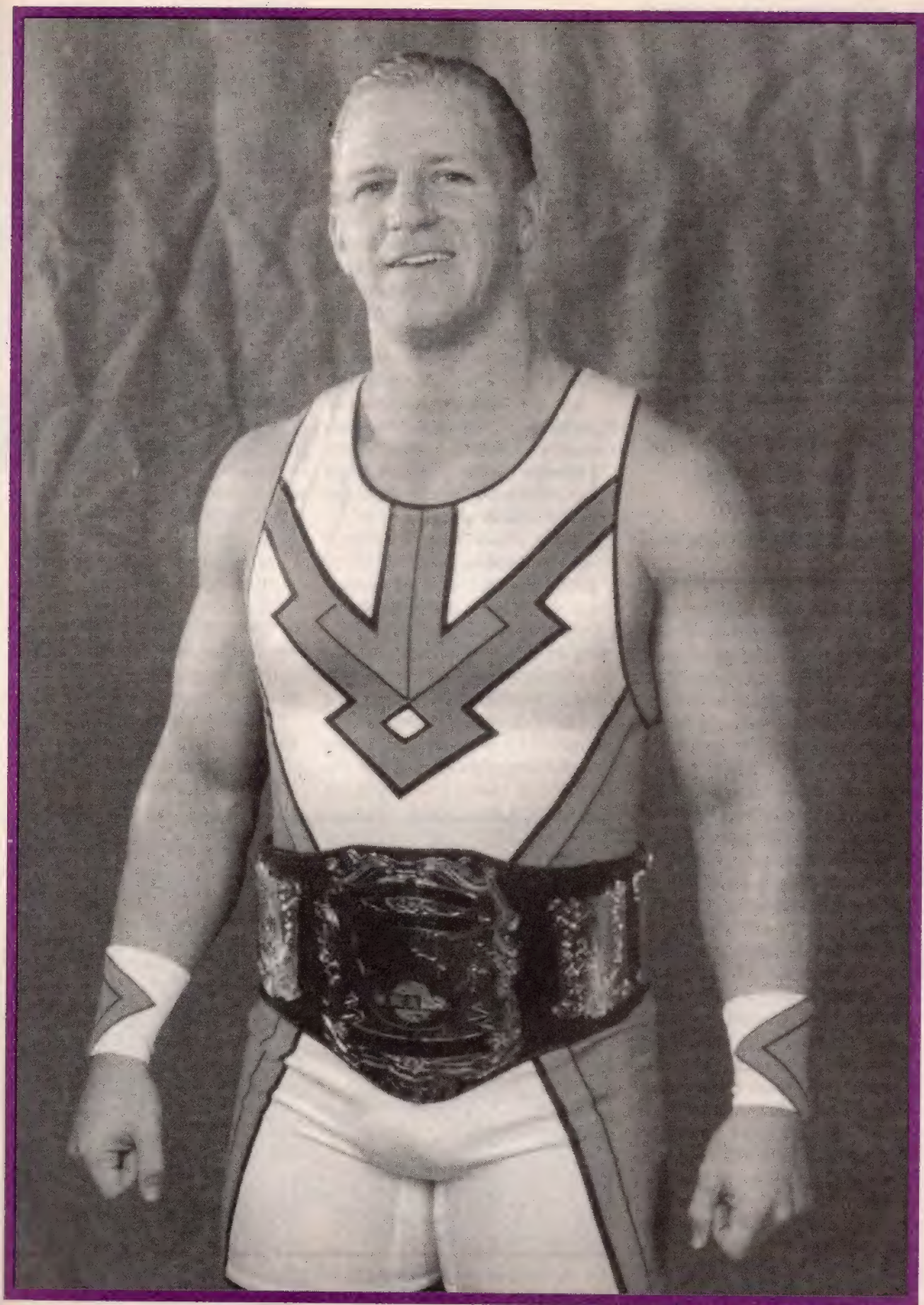
tion, that's scientific wrestling, that's honor. That's the National Wrestling Alliance.

Q: First of all, even you have to admit it's pretty strange seeing wrestlers representing the NWA in the WWF. Those two promotions were rivals throughout the 1970s and 1980s to the point where both organizations refused to acknowledge each other's existence. For all intents and purposes, the NWA vanished in 1992. What is the NWA today and how is it related to the NWA we know and remember?

A: Well, Dan, maybe you thought the NWA vanished in 1992. It didn't, obviously. Yes, the NWA fell into the background a bit, but today the NWA is back and is fully intent on achieving the level of glory it enjoyed since Frank Gotch became the first champion in 1908.

Q: Well, Frank Gotch wasn't actually an NWA wrestler, but we won't get into historical details right here. But I do want to ask: How did the North American tournament finals end up happening in the WWF?

A: Remember back when those clowns from Extreme Championship Wrestling were invited to appear on WWF Mon-





"The North American title is worth four U.S. titles and two Intercontinental titles."

day *Night Raw* last year? That's not wrestling. That's garbage. For the most part, those ECW guys couldn't win a single match without slamming people through tables or breaking chairs over their heads. The fact that people are watching ECW and calling that "wrestling" is atrocious. It goes against everything honorable champions like Lou Thesz, Harley Race, Billy Watson, and men like my father, Jerry Jarrett, worked for. Those men wrestled in high school and in college and honed their skills by learning wrestling and counter-wrestling. They didn't win belts because they were able to set other wrestlers on fire! The fact that the WWF showcased that crap on prime-time television rubbed old-fashioned guys like Jim Cornette, my close friend Jerry Lawler, and me the wrong way.

Q: So it was your disgust with ECW that brought you back to

the WWF?

A: There's more to it than that. I was fed up with the way wrestling as a whole has fallen apart. In WCW, I was fighting a former football player who couldn't reverse a basic armbar. I didn't become a professional wrestler to compete for time with the *Nitro* Girls or the untalented thugs in the NWO. When Jim Cornette called me and told me that the NWA was holding a tournament for the North American title, I decided to sign on. Then Jim and his lawyers managed to work out a deal that allowed NWA talent to participate on WWF shows as long as we sign separate contracts with the WWF. There you go.

Q: Is there any tension in your camp between *The Rock 'n' Roll Express* and Cornette? After all, Cornette did everything he could to destroy the *Express* when he managed *The Midnight Express* in the '80s and *The Heavenly Bodies* just a few years ago. Perhaps the only thing stranger than seeing an NWA title defended in the WWF is seeing Cornette in the

corner of *The Rock 'n' Roll Express*!

A: Ricky Morton, Robert Gibson, and Jim Cornette have an understanding. A very practical understanding. The past is past—over and done with. In this game, if you can't learn to forgive and forget past feuds, you're never going to have any allies. There is absolutely no tension between Jim and the *Express*.

Q: What about between you and Barry Windham? Windham is a former NWA champion and an excellent singles wrestler. Now that he is no longer a member of *The New Blackjacks*, are you concerned that he's planning on challenging you for your belt?

A: Man, you press guys really do love to try to stir things up, don't you? Listen while I repeat myself, and make sure that those batteries in your tape recorder are fresh: There is absolutely no tension in the NWA. None. Got that, Murphy?

Q: I've got it. Are you and Cornette looking to recruit more members into the NWA? Can we expect to see a lot of new faces in the WWF?



Jeff Jarrett (with NWA promoter Dennis Coraluzzo and Jim Cornette) says he's bringing pride—NWA-style pride—back to the sport.



Jarrett, defending his NWA North American title against Skull, feels that fans ought to stop cheering violence and mayhem and start appreciating technical skill again.

A: There are quite a few NWA wrestlers who may join us here in the WWF. It all depends. There's a lengthy interview process, you see. But, to answer your question: Yes, I expect that you will soon see some very familiar faces returning to the WWF and joining the NWA.

Q: Jeff, on your first run in the WWF, you recruited The Roadie, now known as Road Dog, to be in your corner. In WCW, you aligned with The Four Horsemen and then with Debra McMichael. Now you're in with the NWA and Jim Cornette. Is there a reason why you seem to surround yourself with others rather than go it alone? You always fought your own battles in the USWA.

A: You've got it all wrong. I don't associate with them, they associate with me! A lot of people want to associate with a man of my caliber. I see a little of me rubbed off on Road Dog. When he helped push those

"extreme" pieces of manure off the ramp in the dumpster, I forgot all of my bad feelings for him. I called him that night and told him that I was proud of his new attitude. Flair and I had a lot in common, but I wanted him to drop McMichael from the Horsemen and he was hesitant, so I decided to leave it at that. My being around Debra just drove "Mongo" nuts, but she helped me earn the U.S. belt, so it had its purpose, didn't it?

Q: It also cost you the belt.

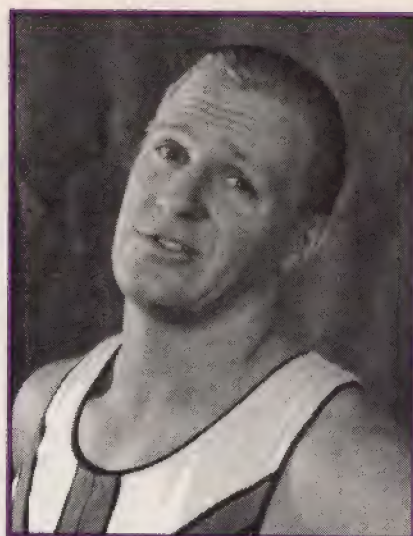
A: See this belt? The North American title is worth four U.S. titles and two Intercontinental titles. I've won a lot of belts, but now I'm a champion with the NWA, the grandfather of them all. Being an NWA champion is the pinnacle of my career. Which reminds me—why aren't I ranked number one in your magazine's rankings?

Q: Jeff, I'm not involved in compiling the rankings, and even if I was, I don't think I'd even want to get into that argument with you.

A: Fine. Just make a little note to whoever does compile the rankings: The name's J-E-double-F, J-A ... well, you should know how to spell it by now, shouldn't you?

Q: I just can't believe that you're the same Jeff Jarrett who used to say you'd rather retire than betray your fans.

A: Oh, you mean the fans who cheer Shawn Michaels and Triple-H? Or do you mean the fans who cheer whenever Steve Austin swears over a microphone? Maybe you mean the fans who cheer the NWO or Steve McMichael? Give me a break! That Jeff Jarrett disappeared the same day pure wrestling fans disappeared.



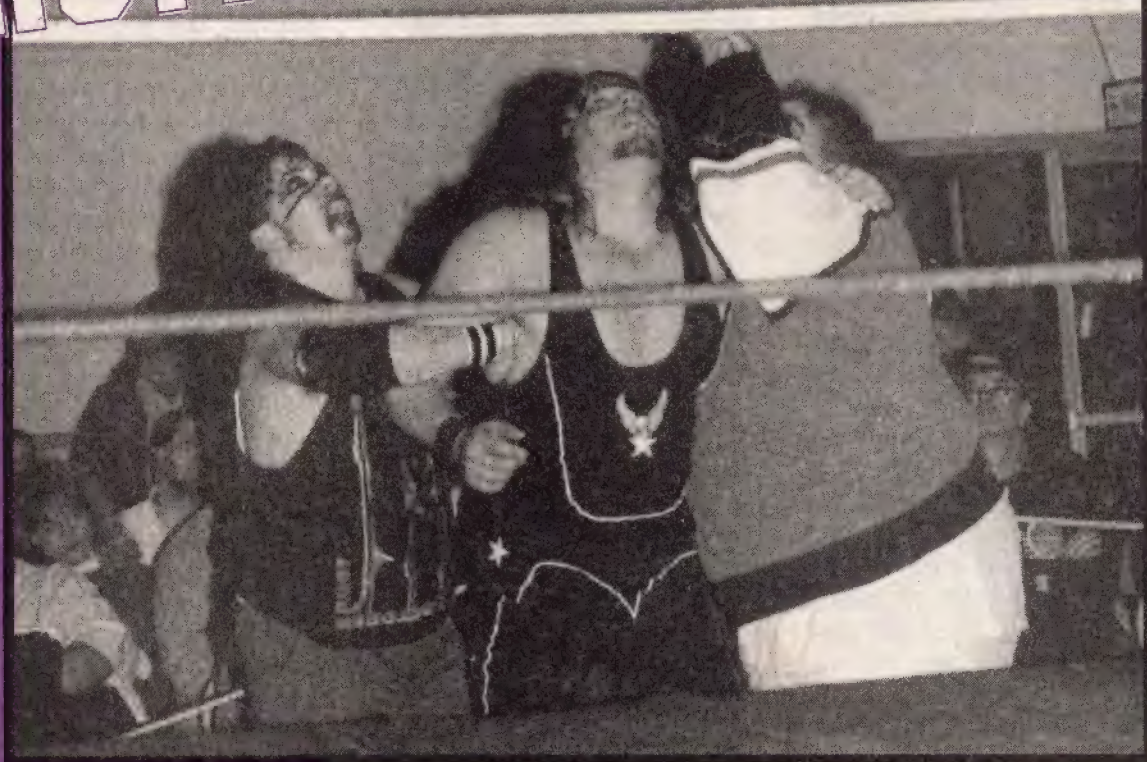
"I want to show the world what real wrestling is all about."

Q: What does the future hold for you? Are you going to focus exclusively on defending your belt, or are you looking to challenge for the WWF World or Intercontinental belts?

A: Both. Let me tell you something: I came back to the WWF for a reason. I want to show the world what real wrestling is all about. All these people cheering Steve Austin and his one move and Shawn Michaels' bare behind and Goldust's freak show are going to see what real wrestling is all about. The NWA didn't survive for 90 years by being a flash in the pan. Substance always rises above style. Wouldn't it be poetic to see an NWA champion win the WWF World title as we enter a new millennium? Forget what you've heard before. Tradition rules, the NWA rules, and Jeff Jarrett will make you forget all of this other garbage going on today. And that, my friend, is the bottom line! □

Twiggy Ramirez, Adam Pearce, and Don Montoya are about to find out exactly how reckless Reckless Youth is (below)! Lance Diamond, meanwhile, shows Alexis Machine the power of his own aerial maneuvers (opposite page, right).

WRESTLING'S HOTTEST RIVALRY...



AND YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW IT EXISTS!



Photos by Brad McFarlin

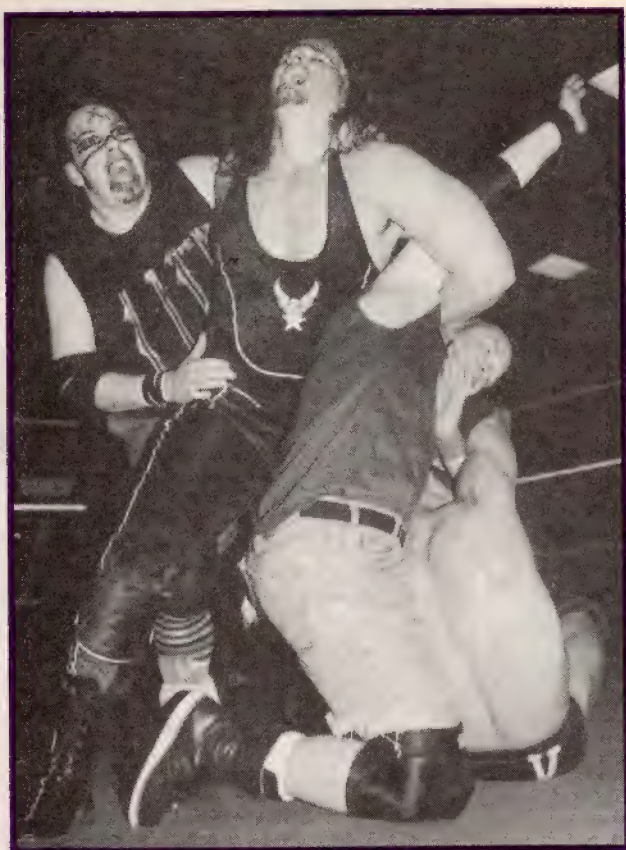
There is an intense war underway in Michigan between two extremely determined independent groups. Feud of the Year? Probably not ... but not for lack of trying!

By Mike Joseph

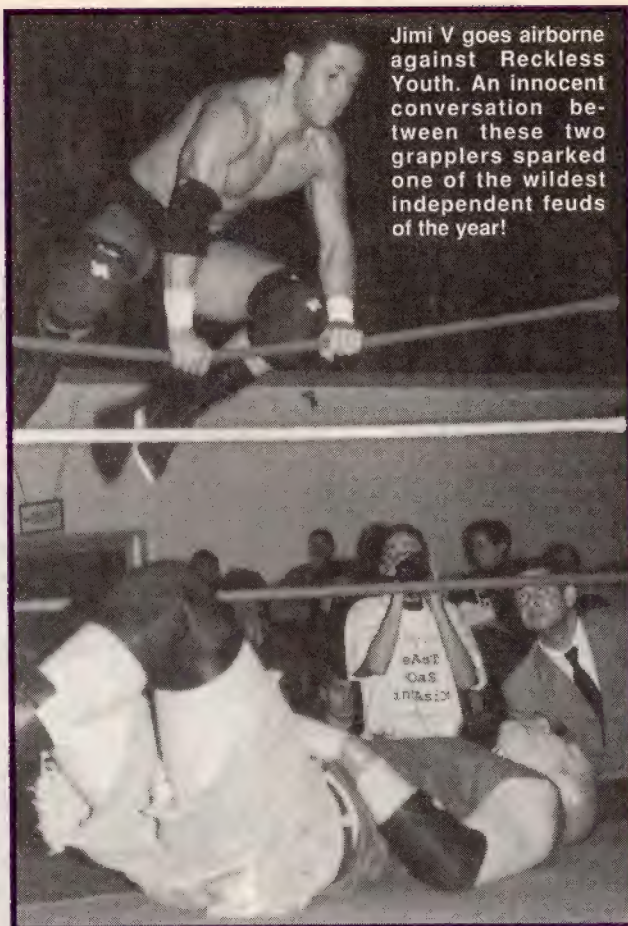
IT STARTED OUT simple enough. Two wrestlers sharing a late-night meal, talking about where they grew up and how they got started in the sport. The conversation quickly turned sour, though, as hometown pride took center stage.

"Everyone knows the guys on the East Coast are the top independent wrestlers in the United States," said Reckless Youth who (surprise, surprise!) is based on the East Coast.

"No way," shouted Jimi V, who wrestles in the Detroit-based Northern States Wrestling Alliance. "The only reason everyone thinks that is because all the magazines are there. East Coast



When Youth and Ramirez take on Jimi V and Pearce, the result is wild violence—and an appropriate reflection of the ferocity of the Midwest's rivalry with the East Coast!



Jimi V goes airborne against Reckless Youth. An innocent conversation between these two grapplers sparked one of the wildest independent feuds of the year!

media conspiracy, if you ask me. As far as I'm concerned, and as far as most of middle America is concerned, the guys here in the Midwest are at least as good, if not better."

"I'll tell you what, pretty boy," Reckless Youth snapped, "I'll bring the top East Coast guys here to the NSWA and we'll prove it!"

"Fine by me," said Jimi V, who left the restaurant, sticking Reckless Youth with the check.

An innocent conversation between two up-and-coming stars on the independent scene quickly snowballed into wrestling's hottest rivalry ... but most fans didn't even realize it happened.

Did you? Well, you aren't alone; it was hardly a challenge that rocked the sport (although it did upset one Midwest Denny's waitress quite a bit!).

But that has all changed in the span of just a few months.

Reckless Youth and Don Mon-

toya had been competing in Midwest independent promotions for more than a year, even though they were mainstays in several East Coast independents. They recently began competing in the NSWA. Some of the competitors from the Michigan area began to take exception to the publicity both Youth and Montoya were receiving in this very publication (as well as our sister magazines) and began questioning—loudly—why they weren't receiving the same kind of press.

"We're just as good as they are," griped Adam Pearce, "probably better. Only problem is, we don't live in the Northeast."

"Three rules of wrestling journalism at work here," sniped NSWA President Dan Curtis. "Location, location, location."

Youth and Montoya, of course, see it differently.

"No matter what those Midwest pretty boys say," said Youth, "the

fact of the matter is we're better, plain and simple, and that's why we get more coverage than they do."

"In the East, you have 20 top-notch guys competing for the same spots in five or six promotions," Montoya said matter-of-factly. "It's not like here, where it's the same six or seven guys all wrestling for maybe three promotions. That's what makes us the best, the wider range of competition."

So the lines were drawn and the stage was set for Reckless Youth and Jimi V to make good on their promise to feud. Youth quickly called former NWA announcer Dave Prazak to collect the some of the East Coast's top talent. Prazak contacted The Misfits (Harley Lewis and Derek Domino), Twiggy Ramirez, and Lance Diamond. He promised them all the same thing: a chance to prove to the Midwest—and the world—

exactly where the top independent stars of today reside.

Prazak and company made a rather rude introduction at the NSWA's show in November. As the opening match got underway, The Misfits hit the ring and clobbered both participants with chairs, clearing the way for Prazak, Montoya, Youth, Diamond, and Ramirez.

"Well, people: You wanted it, so now you got it," beamed a confident Reckless Youth, "now they [he said pointing toward the NSWA dressing room] have to deal with it!"

That rainy night in November, the East Coast Invasion, or ECI, was born. The ECI dominated that night, with all ECI members winning their respective matches ... but not without some help from their ECI brethren, of course.

"How do you expect us to do when every match turns into a six-on-one?" said Chad Casey, who lost to Lance Diamond. "Actually, it was seven-on-one, if

you count that rat Prazak!"

"We have to do what they're doing," said Adam Pearce, who had earlier fallen to Reckless Youth. "We have to set aside our differences and join together to defeat them, because if we don't, we don't stand a chance."

The East Coast Invasion, fresh off an opening-night sweep, was basking in the moment.

"You see what I did?" asked Prazak. "I took the top East Coast independent wrestlers and had them put their differences aside to form a group to show everyone just how good the East Coast wrestling scene is. I love it!"

In January, the ECI returned to wreak more Midwest havoc and continue its domination. The ECI was again victorious in all its matches, including Don Montoya and Dave Prazak winning 50 percent ownership of the NSWA in a tag match against The Gypsy and Knighthawk.

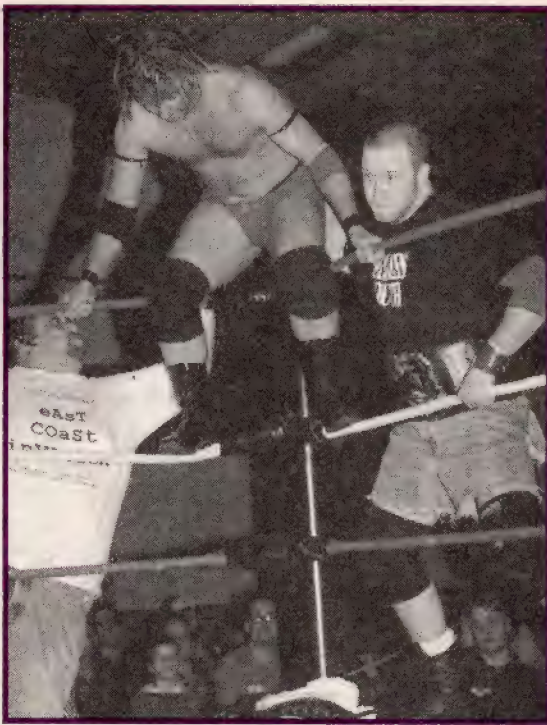
"Not only have we remained unbeaten, but now we have control of their promotion," gloated Montoya, "so we can do whatever we want!"

One of the first orders of business was to fire Curtis and restructure the NSWA office.

"Who knows," said Prazak, "maybe I'll even move to Michigan—not!"

So in the span of two months, have the ECI grapplers really proven they are that much better than the Midwest wrestlers?

"If you look at how the ECI wrestlers have won, it tarnishes their record be-



Montoya and Reckless Youth aren't about to let Chad Casey get away with whatever it is he's planning!

cause they've all won by outside interference," said Jimi V. "They have some great wrestlers, that's for sure, but until they can win cleanly, nothing is settled."

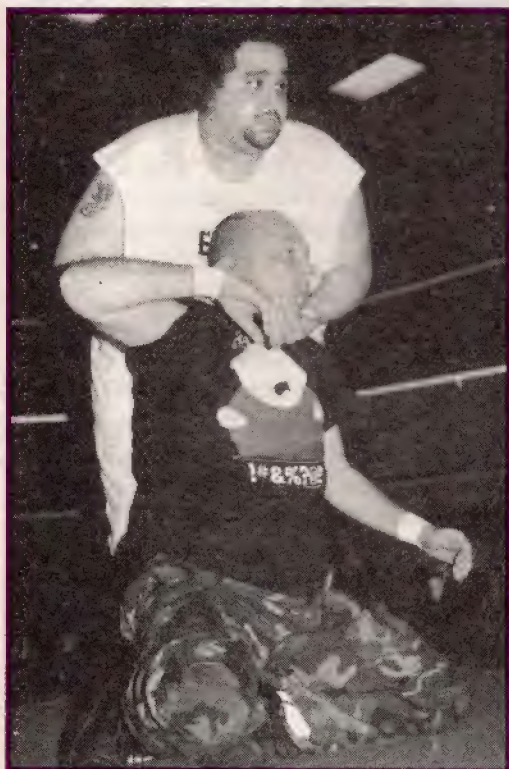
That chance might come sooner than everyone thinks, as there is talk of a big "War Games" match on an upcoming NSWA show. "It won't matter," said Reckless Youth. "'War Games' or not, we're better, and that's that!"

So the ECI came across the northern United States just to defend the honor of the East Coast independents? "No," said Lance Diamond, "we did it because of ego, and in this sport, ego is the biggest motivator."

"Those ECI guys have the biggest egos I've ever seen," Jimi V said. "I guarantee they'll fall apart in time. Don't worry, we'll have our promotion back—all of it—before this magazine even hits the newsstands."

Which area has the best wrestlers? It's a question that probably will never be answered.

No matter. The battle for honor and pride is giving fans some of the best bouts of the year. □



Montoya puts the squeeze on The Gypsy in the November match that saw the East Coast stars put the squeeze on the NSWA—by winning half of the promotion!

The telephone wires sizzle each month, as two top wrestlers voice their rage and hostility toward each other. Here's the unedited transcript of their conversation, your chance to feel the raw emotion that results when two antagonists face off ...

One On One

WHEN CHRIS JERICO first challenged Rey Misterio Jr. for the WCW cruiserweight title, most expected a clean contest with action occurring both inside and high above the ring. Instead, fans were treated to a vile and sickening display.

Jericho's change in attitude began to manifest itself weeks before the match between the two at Souled Out. A loss to Scott Hall on Nitro marked the start of a miserable slump for Jericho. As the losses mounted, "Lion Heart" found himself in danger of slipping out of title contention. When Jericho was given a title shot against Misterio, he was desperate for a big win.

Jericho wrestled one of the best matches of his career against the champion, targeting Misterio's legs throughout. However, despite the punishment Jericho doled out to Misterio's knee, the masked sensation regained the offensive and attempted to put Jericho away with a huracanrana. Jericho deftly blocked the maneuver and locked Misterio in his "Lion Tamer."

That was when the new Chris Jericho showed how sadistic he can be. Jericho refused to release the hold after Misterio submitted. When the fans continued to boo, Jericho pledged to give them something to boo about and rammed a steel toolbox into Misterio's left knee.

Afterward, Misterio was diagnosed with torn meniscus and anterior cruciate ligaments. Misterio could be out of action five months or more. In the meantime, Jericho has mockingly claimed that he is devoting his title reign to Misterio.

It didn't take too much to get both men to agree to discuss what happened ... "One On One."

ONE ON ONE



"I'm finally making my mark in WCW and it's all because of what I did to you. Sorry, amigo, it's a dog-eat-dog world, and there's no room for little poodles."

—Chris Jericho

CHRIS JERICO: Rey, it's great to have a chance to talk to you, amigo! You know, I kept meaning to visit you in the hospital, but you know how a champion's schedule goes, right? How's that knee holding up? *(There is a long pause as Rey Misterio doesn't respond.)*

CJ: Oh, I'm sorry, Rey. I know you have trouble with English. Let's see. *Como estas, muchacho? Bien?*

REY MISTERIO JR.: You make me sick, Jericho.

CJ: Sick? *Tienes calor?* You have a fever? I'm still kind of new at this Spanish stuff. I ordered some language lessons on tape that I listen to on flights between title defenses. I figured that if I'm going to dedicate my reign to you that I'll eventually have to wrestle on a big Rey Misterio Jr. benefit card in Mexico, and I want to know the language well enough to thank all the fans for their support.

RM: Maybe you should pay a little more attention to defending that title of yours. I'm sure that by the time this magazine comes out, you'll have lost it anyway.

CJ: Rey, I've got a question I've been dying to ask you since Souled Out. Do you let your doctors see you with your mask off, or do you hobble out of the hospital whenever someone tries to take it off?

RM: It shouldn't surprise me that someone like you would

N ONE



"I've known you for a while now. I know you're not an evil man. You're doing all this for attention, and you're getting attention, but it's for all the wrong reasons."

—Rey Misterio Jr.

make light of my injuries, but it still does. What happened to you, Jericho? What made you so insecure about your own abilities that you had to go and put my career in jeopardy?

CJ: What's that? Oh, I'm sorry. I put the phone down for a second. I just wanted to finish shining this belt. You know, with a little elbow grease, you can get this so shiny you can see yourself in it. Anyway, what were you saying? You still have a fever, amigo?

RM: I don't know why I'm bothering to even talk to you. You've lost sight of everything that's truly important. Titles come and go, Jericho, but once you lose respect, that can be the kind of thing that destroys your career. Enjoy your title reign while you can, because you have some of the finest cruiserweights in the world gunning for you.

CJ: Is this where you tell me that I'm going from the hunter to the hunted? Or is this where you say that you wouldn't want to be in my shoes? You know, maybe when you get back in the ring in around 2003, I can help you out with your interviews. It's the least I can do for the man who inspired "Lion Heart" to greatness.

RM: I should be back in the ring this summer. You may have hurt me bad, but you didn't hurt me that bad. As for your "greatness," all that you're doing now is making a fool

of yourself. The fans call you a crybaby. Sometimes they call you a lot worse than that. How does that make you feel when an arena full of people look at you as a joke? Is that why you tried to cripple me? Were you trying to prove you're a tough guy?

CJ: That's enough! The fans cheer my every move in that ring. When I go to the finest restaurants, I have to move through throngs of beautiful admiring ladies just to get a table. Fans wait for me every night after the matches. They love me—they really love me!

RM: They don't love you at all. I read the signs the fans wave at you. Maybe you should buy a dictionary so you can find out what some of the words mean.

CJ: And maybe you should buy a wheelchair, you little freak.

RM: Very witty, Chris. No one's ever thought to make fun of my size before. Maybe you could teach me a little about the fine art of interviews. You certainly couldn't teach me anything in the ring.

CJ: Listen, Misterio, you're getting me angry. The last time you did that, look what I did to that spindly little leg of yours. I suggest you shut your mouth before I put you on the shelf permanently. I really shouldn't expect someone as pitiful as you to get me upset. Let me just take another look at this belt. Let me ask my admirer in the other room. Hey, baby, who's better, me or Misterio? Yeah, I think so, too. Hey, Rey, maybe you can call your physical therapist and ask him if you're better than me. Maybe that nurse you hit on when you were in the hospital. You know, the fat one who collected the bedpans.

RM: Chris, I've known you for a while now. I know you're not an evil man. You're doing all this for attention, and you're getting attention, but it's for all the wrong reasons. Like I said, championship glory is fleeting. Regaining the respect of the fans and your fellow wrestlers can take a lifetime. You are a great athlete without this arrogant attitude. Give it up while you can.

CJ: You know all about giving up, don't you, Rey? I'm finally making my mark in WCW and it's all because of what I did to you. Sorry, amigo, it's a dog-eat-dog world, and there's no room for little poodles. Besides, remember I beat you cleanly to win this belt. Instead of lecturing me, why don't you just admit that I was the better wrestler at Souled Out? Everyone else has.

RM: You made me submit, and you wrestled a great match. It's a shame that you have to ruin people's memory of that side of you by resorting to this.

CJ: Listen, Rey, I've got to run. My lady friend says she's just finished cooking dinner for me. I'd love to chat more, but I don't want my tacos to get cold. If you want to talk to me more, give my fan club a buzz. They'll let you know where you can get in touch with me.

RM: That's okay, Jericho. I think you'll be hearing from me again soon enough.

CJ: Oh, Rey, let me say again that I'm sorry about that knee. It'll never happen again.

RM: Right. □

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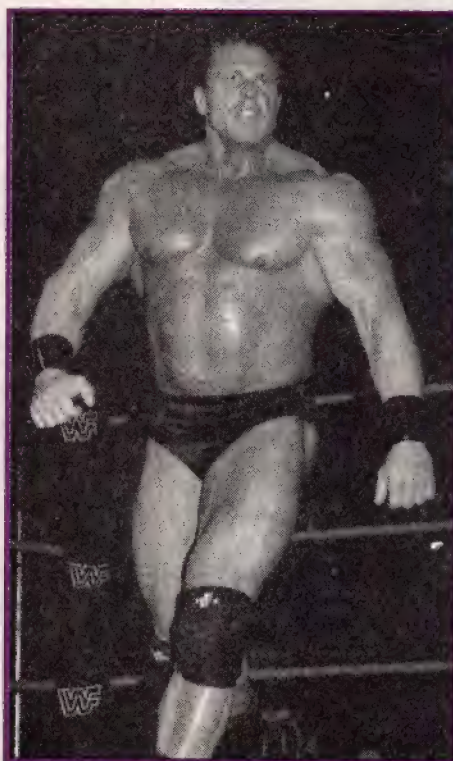
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Sincerely Yours

(Continued from page 5)



Fans can catch Brakus on the Extreme Championship Wrestling circuit, reader Marc Fleer will be happy to know. He will *not* be happy to know that, indeed, Brakus is currently serving as Lance Wright's bodyguard.

YOUNG AT HART

With all due respect to The Hart Foundation, I believe they are too old to compete successfully in WCW at this time. Sure, Bret Hart beat Ric Flair at Souled Out, but after watching Flair take apart an old and slow Jim Niedhart, and watching Davey Boy Smith limp around the ring against Steve McMichael, I think Owen might have the right idea by staying in the WWF—even if it is the number-two federation right now.

True, Hogan, Savage, Luger, and Flair are just as old, if not older, than Hart, but those guys are in control right now and made the WCW what it is today. Hart's time has come and gone.

WILLIAM GAMBLE
Ft. Wayne, IN

WHERE'S BRAKUS?

Can you guys please print more information about my favorite ECW wrestler, Brakus? He used to wrestle at all the hardcore shows, but I haven't seen him in a long time.

I know he is supposed to be Lance Wright's bodyguard, but I hope he isn't because that would be a complete waste of his time and talent. There were also rumors that Brakus would go back to the WWF. Maybe he's hurt.

Wherever he is, I hope he gets back into action soon.

MARC FLEER
Blackwood, NJ

THE TAG TEAM BLUES

What has happened to the state of tag team wrestling in the WWF? In just about every federation, the pool of tag teams is weak and getting weaker by the year.

The fact that Billy Gunn and Jesse James can even win the belts, let alone defend them for this long, speaks volumes for the level of tag team competition in the WWF.

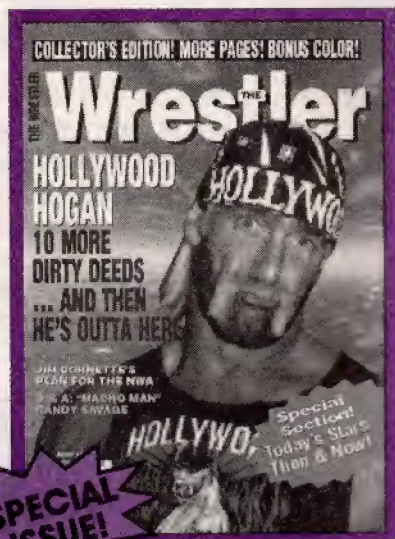
Things aren't better in WCW. Those belts go back and forth between the Steiners and The Outsiders (Kevin Nash and Scott Hall) because there are no other teams out there to challenge them.

I don't know if wrestling promoters are trying to phase tag team wrestling out of the sport or if wrestlers just don't care about teaming up anymore, but whatever the reason is, it sure looks like tag team wrestling will soon be a thing of the past.

LUCY SAMPSON
Inglewood, CA □

This Month In...

THE Wrestler



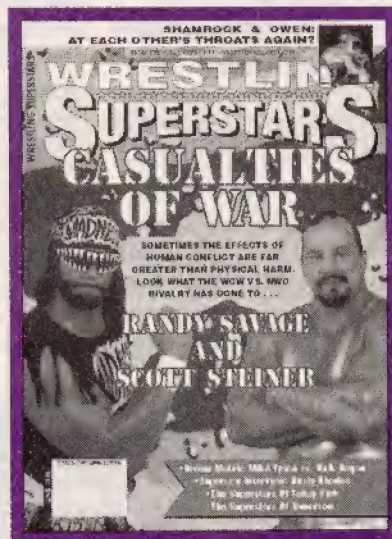
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ISSUE!**

How much longer does “**HOLLYWOOD**” **HOGAN** plan to keep wrestling? He won't say, but he did share with us a list of the 10 dirty deeds he wants to do before he's done. You won't believe what's on his agenda ... Does **JIM CORNETTE** really care about the NWA name and tradition, or has he just found a clever way to climb back into the spotlight? ... Wrestlers change a lot as the years go by. Sometimes you don't realize just how much until you dig out old pictures. That's what we did in putting together a special “Then And Now” section featuring 15 top stars!

All this—and much more—
in the June 1998 issue of
The Wrestler

NOW ON SALE!

WRESTLING ***** SUPERSTARS



Wars have a way of taking their toll on even the strongest of men. The WCW-NWO war sure has. **RANDY SAVAGE** and **SCOTT STEINER** could tell that. They've been destroyed mentally. Will they ever recover? ... **KEN SHAMROCK** and **OWEN HART** hated each other last summer. Now they're teaming, but they'd rather be at each other's throats! ... Which young stars are destined to make it big? Don't miss our special section in which the superstars of today pick the superstars of tomorrow ... Is **JIMMY HART** serious about forming a new version of **THE HART FOUNDATION** in WCW?

All this—and much more—
in the June 1998 issue of
Wrestling Superstars

NOW ON SALE!

On The Road

(Continued from page 10)

wrestling fans who recognize him. He dines at the Buckhead Diner, trying to enjoy a plate of salmon and maybe a glass of white wine with a friend, and people walk up to him at his table and insult him.

I have seen this. I recently spent a day with Nick Patrick, and it was not enjoyable. I saw the good and the bad side of people. I saw the good and the bad side of Nick Patrick.

I saw a man who tries to control himself when people have these outbursts, but just can't resist replying, just can't resist the argument. The voice of reason has lost all reason.

I see him shopping for food and seeing everything as a slight: the display that is bare of his favorite cereal, the woman who gets in front of him on line, the bagger who chooses to bag the old woman's groceries instead of his.

Nick Patrick sees injustice in everything and wonders ...

Will I have to go into another line of work?

Why can't people forgive and forget?

Is this the way it's always going to be?

And most of all ... Did I really make the right decision in Sting-Hogan?

Even though he knows that he did, even though he knows he has been vindicated by this magazine and its sister publications.

But Nick Patrick is beyond the point at which he can get an even break.

So we sit in the Buckhead Diner, Patrick

with his salmon, me with my fettucine, the prices are outlandish—they're certainly not fair—but nothing is fair in this world, at least not the things that matter, and Patrick has nobody to blame but himself. But he has not come to that realization, so he suffers. Not entirely in silence, because he'll speak to anyone who'll listen.

"They're blind to the truth," he says of WCW officials, WCW fans, WCW commentators, everybody. "They wanted Sting to win that match so badly that they were willing to believe anything. But that's where a good referee comes in.

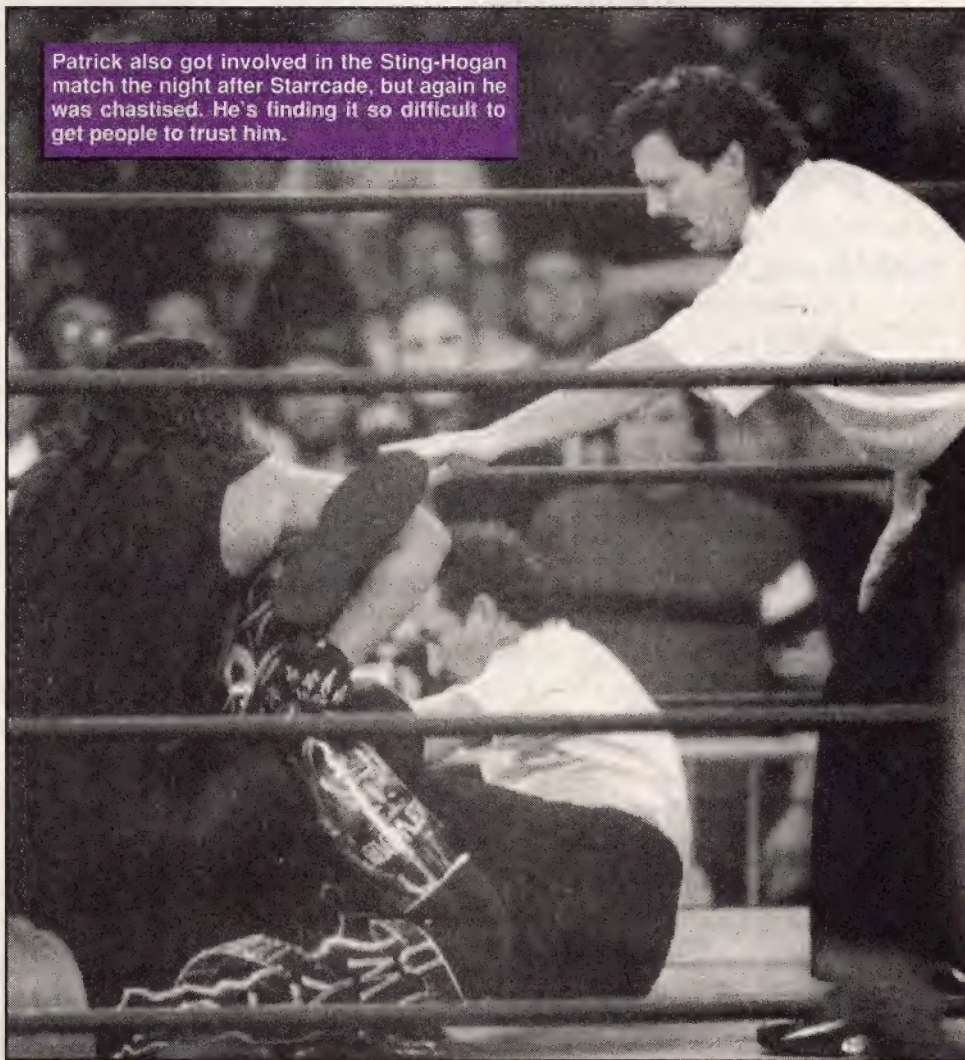
He doesn't listen to what people are saying. He doesn't care about what people want. All he wants to do is referee a fair match and let the best man win.

"The way that match was ultimately decided was disgusting. It was an outrage."

It was, in fact, the way the NWO would have matches decided in its favor if it could have its way, and the way Nick Patrick, former NWO referee, would have decided matches.

Nick Patrick has lost all credibility. Unfortunately, I don't think he'll ever get it back. □

Patrick also got involved in the Sting-Hogan match the night after Starrcade, but again he was chastised. He's finding it so difficult to get people to trust him.



Behind the Door

(Continued from page 12)

Know what this sounds like to me? Sounds like ECW is trying to set up more Storm vs. Candido/Douglas/Bigelow brawls. They're asking for trouble. Of course they're asking for trouble. ECW survives on trouble. It thrives on trouble.

"Let's make two sworn enemies be teammates," they might have said in their secret memo. "Then let's watch the feathers fly."

Feathers? No, they didn't say feathers. Who knows what they said, other than that this has the potential to be a very long and nasty feud. It's a great concept: enemies fighting on behalf of each other. Storm doesn't want Candido to be tag team champion; Candido doesn't want Storm to be tag team champion. But they both want to be tag team champions. Also, Bigelow and Douglas will have to be careful about interfering and attacking Storm during tag team title defenses because they won't

want to cost Candido his belt.

Chances are this entire issue will be settled very soon. A team like this simply can't survive, so they'll lose the belts quickly and probably not without an honest effort. They'll try. There'll just be a limit to their trying.

"Tag team partners don't have to like each other," said Buh Buh Ray Dudley, who happens to like his tag team partner, his supposed half-brother D-Von. "But there has to be a willingness to work together. If you can't work together, why be a team?"

Because ECW says so, that's why.

You know, I'm getting a little tired of ECW. This is the federation that makes no sense. It's not always about wrestling, it's not about the rules, and it's almost impossible for a champion to get disqualified in a title defense, yet when it comes to following rules, ECW chooses to enforce the most

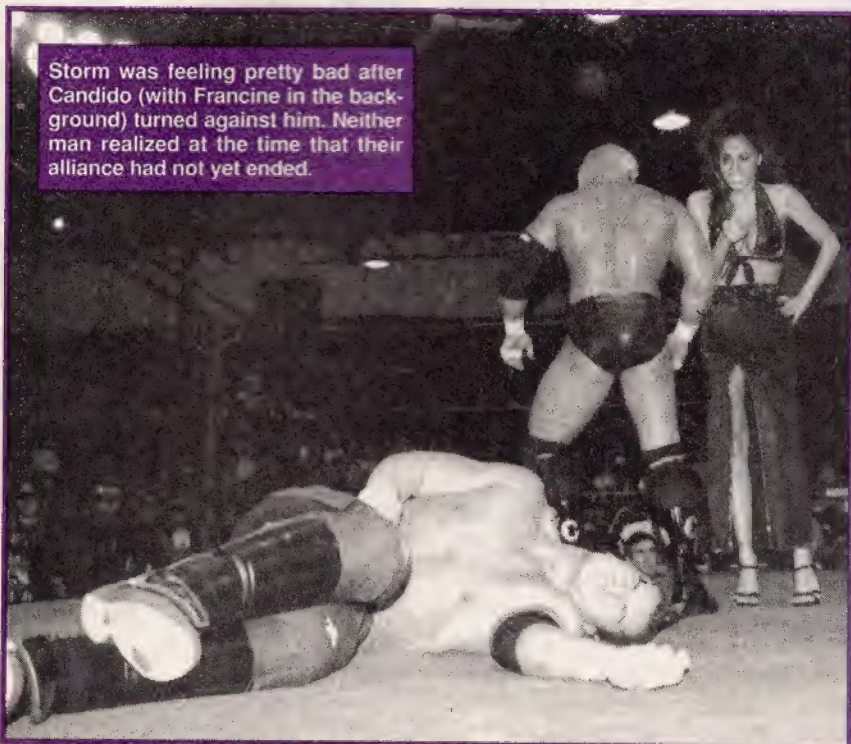
obscure ones it can find. In fact, I don't even know that this is a rule. Why didn't ECW simply declare the title vacant and order a tournament rather than carry on this sham?

Actually, I've already answered this question. Because they want more trouble between Storm and The Triple Threat.

Congratulations, Lance. You've been fed to the wolves by your own federation.

No matter what happens, Lance Storm is going to get hurt, and The Triple Threat is going to have problems, because nobody in there can trust each other.

Maybe they would have been better off with Storm instead of Bigelow. Maybe it'll still turn out that way. ☐



Storm was feeling pretty bad after Candido (with Francine in the background) turned against him. Neither man realized at the time that their alliance had not yet ended.

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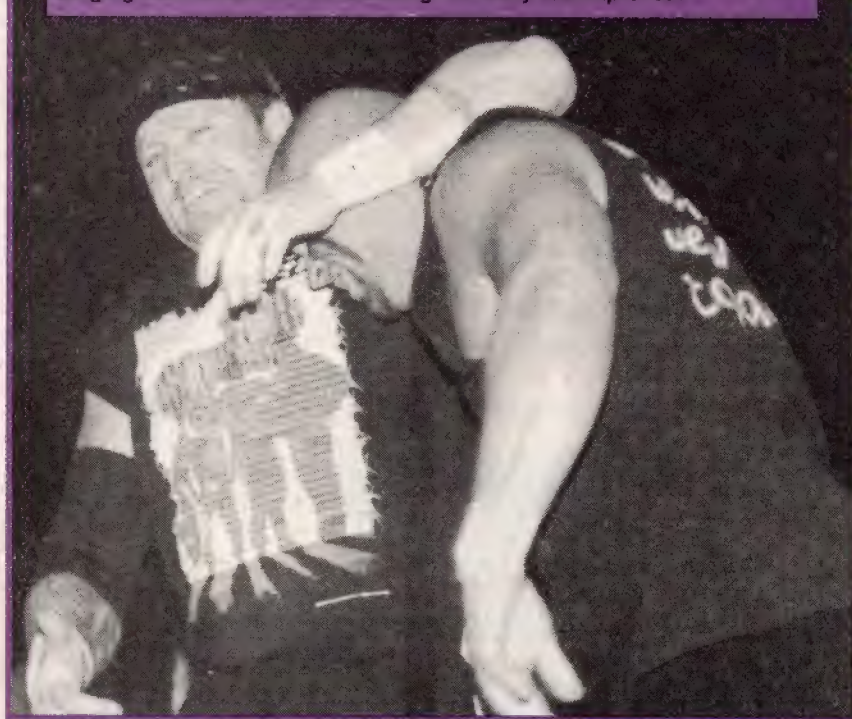
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The Insider

(Continued from page 14)

The "Road Dog" applies a headlock on Headbanger Mosh. It's hard to believe that just last year James was getting more attention for his singing than he was for his wrestling. He really has improved.



nant" doesn't exactly trip off the tongue now, does it?)

But for me now, the waiting game is underway. Fans are starting to warm up to Gunn and James a bit. That doesn't mean that they have to reciprocate or modify their behavior in any way. They still give me signs of hope, like when they pushed a dumpster full of hardcores off a stage and down 10 feet to the floor. Many fans and officials were indignant over this heinous act. But if Terry Funk or Cactus Jack had thrown the other in that same dumpster and pushed it off the platform, there would have been cheers and chants of "E-C-W! E-C-W!"

Now the Outlaws are the bane of WWF humanity. Some of my fellow writers say they are guilty of attempted murder and demand that they be stripped of the WWF tag

title and possibly even tossed out of the WWF for good. *Bah!* The WWF has enough problems with other titles. Austin chickens out and hands his to Rocky Maivia. The last two European title changes have been farcical and more resembled Monty Python skits than actual wrestling matches. And don't get me started on Shawn Michaels' World title reigns.

Quality champs. Quality rulebreakers. You can't find too many of either anymore. Too many of those with black souls are willing to sell out the first chance they get. They'll still try to act bad and talk trash, but they'll do it while wearing merchandise with either their name or their likeness on it. And that merchandise is always conveniently available at the nearest concession stand.

I'm tired of gray areas and

round edges. I want black and white back with sharp, defined edges. I long for the days when good was good and bad was bad and the fans knew their place. They cheered and booed like Pavlovian dogs and left the thinking to others (like me).

WCW cries for tradition. The NWA cries for the good old days. Well, I cry for a return to the basics of good and bad. These "twains" should never be meeting. There are guys with white hats who are cheered and guys with black hats who are booed. Fact is, there is little quality that exists between both factions. The fence dividing the two is about to buckle from the weight of all the wrestlers straddling it.

So if the Outlaws must stand alone, then I will support them and their nefarious efforts wholeheartedly.

But reality rears its ugly head in this argument. Fact is, fan favorites make more green than rulebreakers. T-shirt, hat, and action figure sales help the wrestling world spin wildly on its axis. A true rulebreaker holds the seven deadly sins close to his heart. But one of them is greed. Dollar signs in the eyes of guys like the Outlaws could cloud their vision.

For Gunn and James, I offer this: Remember, first and foremost, you are wrestlers. You realized that you weren't singers and now you have to understand that you're not models for merchandise, either. Stay successful and out of the career dumpster. For I fear that someone will push you over the edge and you will emerge with smiles on your faces and hands extended.

Just stick to your "Guns" so you don't go to the "Dogs." □

On Assignment

(Continued from page 16)

While Dillon's ruling is weak and without merit, it's a ruling nonetheless. Nash responds to it by power-bombing everyone in sight, including referees. So, someone tell me why Nash was not *suspended*.

Now I'm not saying being an executive with a major wrestling company is ever easy. Just look at Dillon. He has to run a promotion that has been under siege for nearly two years now. But clear thinking should be more the rule than the exception. Look at some other examples of less-than-spectacular decisions.

Remember Stanley Blackburn gift-wrapping the AWA World title for Nick Bockwinkel following the retirement of Verne Gagne in 1981? He claimed that a tournament for the belt would have been too time-consuming. Blackburn knew for months that he'd have to figure out something to do if Gagne was still champion when he retired, and that was the best he could do?

Remember Bill Watts banning all top-ropes moves in WCW? He claimed that those moves were too dangerous and could lead to career-ending injuries. That decision came right before he removed all padding from the ring-side area.

Dillon's move ranks right up there in the bonehead hall of fame. And he obviously hasn't learned from Watts' mistake.

He might well be trying to help WCW in this instance, but he's running the risk of strengthening the NWO. Fans like watching Nash use his power bomb, and now a lot of them might be looking at him as the victim here. Besides, to the NWO, rules mean nothing.

What Dillon is really doing is taking wrestling out of wrestling. I

mentioned the possibility of banning the piledriver before. What if a headlock snaps someone's vertebrae? Will that hold be banned then? What if an Irish whip causes a wrestler to blow out his knee? What if an armdrag causes a wrestler to break a nail? The bottom line is just about every move and hold has the potential to cause injury.

If I were a WCW wrestler and were offered a match with Kevin Nash, I would take time to consider the risks involved. I'm sure I'd realize right away that there would be a decent chance I'd get power-bombed. If I believed the risk to be too great, I wouldn't accept the match. It's that simple.

Plus, there are so many subtle variations of the power bomb, including Scott Hall's "Outsiders' Edge." Do you disallow those finishers, too?

Anyone care for a can of worms?

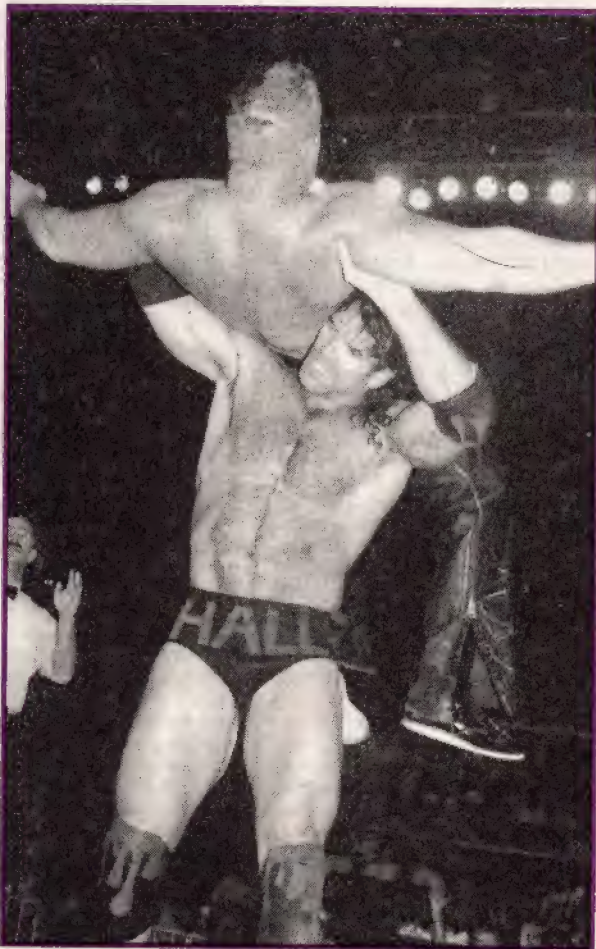
Executive decisions in the wrestling industry are very easily reversible, but at times they can send dangerous messages and set even more dangerous precedents. Dillon can make his decision and follow it up with harsh enforcement, but at what expense? In this day and age with huge contracts, wrestlers consider fines pocket change. They pay them with such ease that there is nothing to discourage their actions.

Now that is not to say that there should

not be rules and regulations. But those rulings should be well thought out, fair, and take into account the fact that wrestling is a violent sport in which there are many inherent risks. Rules should never be punitive or reactionary. Dillon's decision was both.

He outlawed the power bomb for all the wrong reasons. Okay, so the NWO deserves every setback that WCW can throw its way. But if WCW wants to win this battle, it must do it by addition, not subtraction. Bring back the power bomb for all the right reasons.

Maybe then someone can execute one on Nash. □



If you think about it, Scott Hall's "Outsiders' Edge" is just a variation of the power bomb, but J.J. Dillon hasn't said anything about banning this finisher.

Gorgeous Jim Garvin's New Image: **WILL BEAUTY KILL THE BEAST?**

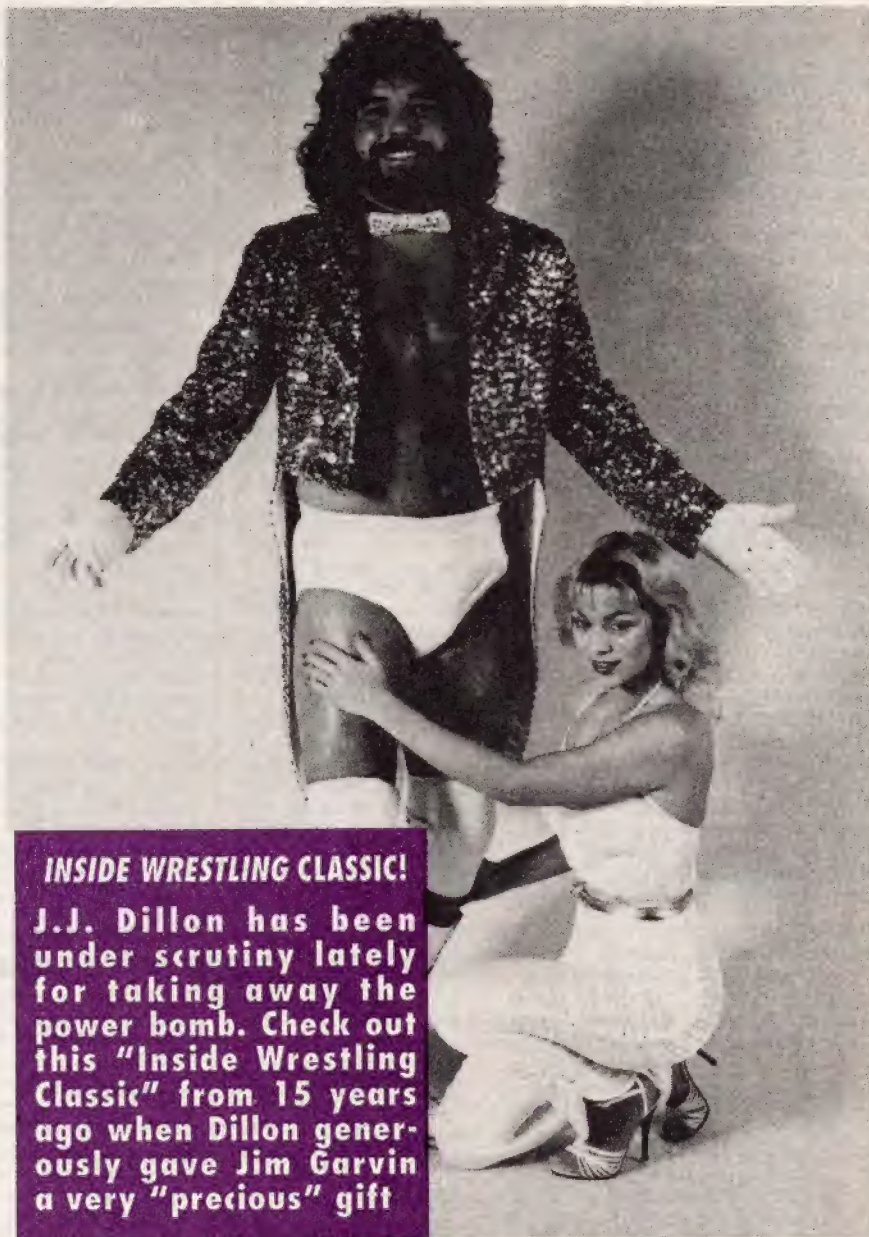
THE HAUNTING 'OPENING strains of a popular song blast through the public address system. The arena goes dark, except for a number of spotlights that sweep through the bleachers.

Suddenly, the beams merge. Under that intense light stands a man dripping in gold and sequins. On his arm, a blonde beauty worthy of the cover of *Vogue* magazine stares at him in awe. They make their way down the aisle to the ring. Her eyes are transfixed, never straying from the subject of her devotion. He walks with pride, his stride almost boastful.

They approach the ring apron. She climbs up first, sitting ever so gracefully on the second strand and pushing the top strand up. He climbs through the ropes into the ring, his sequin-studded jacket not touching either rope strand. She follows, and begins to help him out of the jacket and matching bow tie.

"Look at that. Just look at that," J.J. Dillon said as he stood by the door to the dressing room area. "It's fantastic! What an entrance! Glamour has returned to professional wrestling, thanks to J.J. Dillon."

Indeed, Dillon had staged a spectacle of sizable proportions for the fans that evening. But the spectacle was not intended for the fans. It was a gift from Dillon to his protege, "Gorgeous" Jimmy Garvin.



INSIDE WRESTLING CLASSIC!

J.J. Dillon has been under scrutiny lately for taking away the power bomb. Check out this "Inside Wrestling Classic" from 15 years ago when Dillon generously gave Jim Garvin a very "precious" gift

One cannot fault J.J. Dillon's generosity. As a reward for good deeds done, he has given Jim Garvin the first in what could be a long line of female valets. The wrestling community has seen a definite change in Gorgeous Jimmy since Precious has been in his employ. Will she be the ruination of Garvin's career?

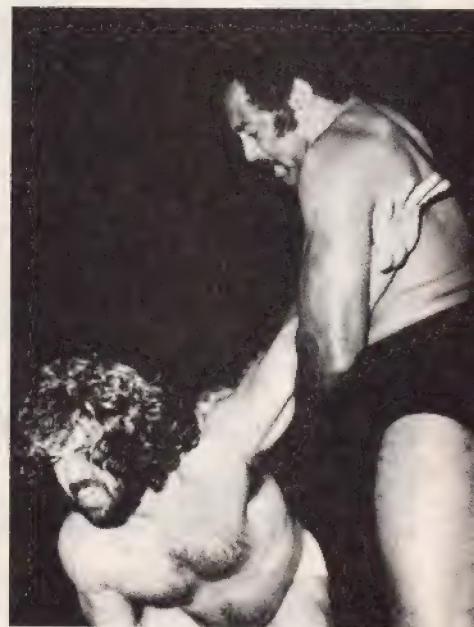


Gorgeous Jim Garvin is in his glory as he and his valet, Precious, walk down the aisle to the ring (above left). Precious, a gift from J.J. Dillon (background, below) removes Garvin's white gloves. With the beautiful blonde on his mind, how can Garvin concentrate on Charlie Cook (above right).



"I have rewarded Jimmy for a job well done," Dillon said. "The beautiful young thing on his arm is named Precious. And isn't she? I interviewed thousands of stunning Florida beauties to find her. And she's just the first. Jimmy will be bestowed with a number of female valets. After all, variety *is* the spice of life, if you know what I mean."

But what did Garvin do to deserve



such a reward?

"What did he do? What did he do? Well, what didn't he do, why don't you tell me that!" an annoyed Dillon said. "He is a fine man who listens to me and carries out my orders. I've been hard on him at times, maybe too hard. But he's an excellent wrestler who can, with a little nudging, be a great. It is for the totality of his achievements that he is being rewarded."

Dillon then scurried down the aisle and practically leaped from the arena floor into the ring to share the spotlight with Garvin and his "gift." The manager delighted in the whistles and catcalls from the audience, knowing that these spectators were jealous of his charge. That was just what he wanted. The spattering of jeers became louder as the adoring Precious slowly began to remove Garvin's white gloves. The three of them were all smiles as the crowd's screams grew to thunderous proportions.

Precious then left the ring to allow Garvin to get on with the job at hand.

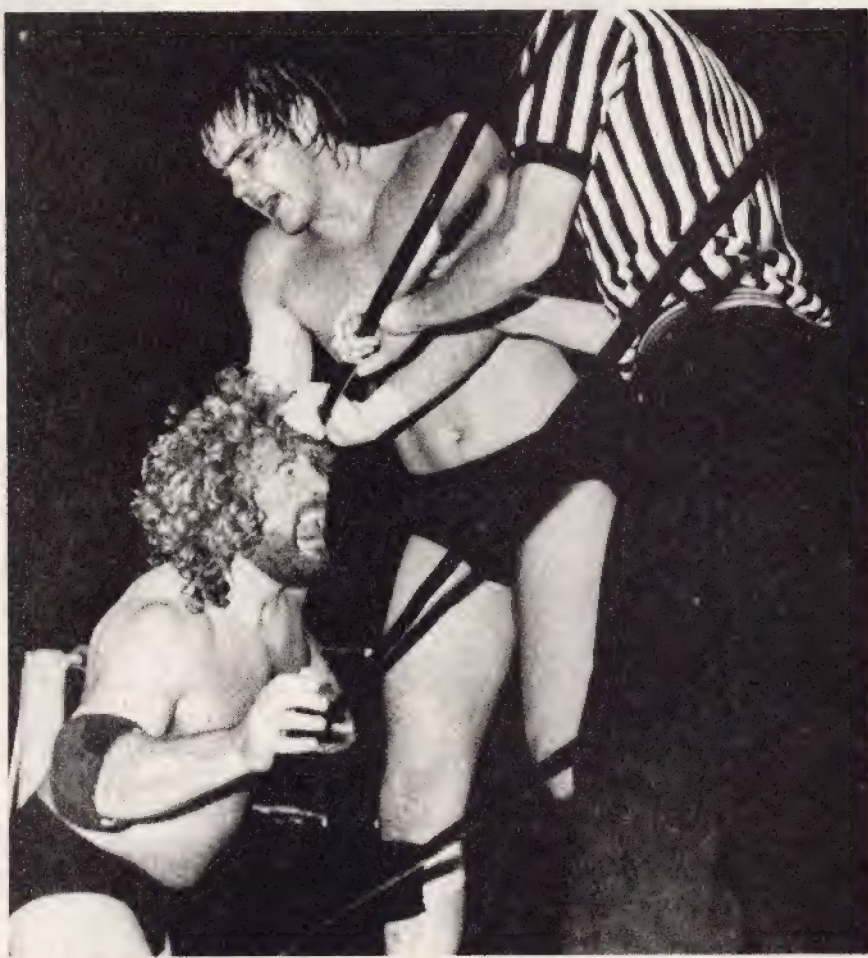


Garvin was rewarded by Dillon for a job well done. But since his image change, Garvin has not looked as sharp in the ring. Gorgeous Jim is on the receiving end against Cook (above) and Southern champion Barry Windham (right).

And a tough job it would be. Garvin at times seemed distracted. At one point, he actually released an armbar to fix his hair.

"I've noticed that," Barry Windham said as he observed from ringside. "He's been doing that a lot. Maybe he's doing it for her. I know I wouldn't be able to wrestle if she was looking at me like that. It's breaking his concentration. Any perceptive wrestler would take advantage of that. Maybe Dillon's little reward is backfiring on him. And what about the next girl? Knowing the way Dillon throws around the bucks, she'll probably be even more beautiful."

In the ring, Charlie Cook had the upper hand. Gorgeous Jimmy wouldn't let this last for long, however. He unloaded his arsenal of illegal tactics and bullied his way to victory.





Garvin quickly jumped to his feet, not to have the referee raise his hand in victory, but to call Precious back into the ring to help him celebrate the win. Despite the boos of the crowd, Garvin and his valet took their bows like Broadway theater performers.

Walking from the ring back to the dressing room, her eyes once again did not stray from his. Nobody believed she could be that devoted to a man of Garvin's quality.

"Hey, why wouldn't she be?" Garvin said. "She's never met anyone like me before. Hahaha, she should actually be paying J.J. for being allowed to hang around me."

What does Precious think about the situation?

"She can't talk to you, she's busy," Garvin explained. "She getting things ready for my shower. She works for me, not you. If you want to talk to a beautiful blonde, get your own."

"This is only the beginning. There will be more blondes, and brunettes, and redheads—yeah, I like redheads. Years from now they can have a reunion and talk about what it was like to work for Gorgeous Jimmy Garvin." □



Even when he is on the offensive, Garvin appears to lack concentration.

OFFICIAL RATINGS

TOP 15

1—STING

(4) WCW World champion

2—STEVE AUSTIN

(3) No. 2 contender: WWF World title

3—HULK HOGAN

(5) No. 2 contender: WCW World title

4—DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE

(2) U.S. heavyweight champion

5—OWEN HART

(10) WWF European champion

6—BOOKER T

(-) WCW TV champion

7—KEN SHAMROCK

(-) No. 5 contender: WWF World title

8—LEX LUGER

(7) No. 3 contender: WCW World title

9—CHRIS JERICHO

(15) WCW cruiserweight champion

10—TAZ

(-) ECW TV champion

11—TAKA MICHINOKU

(-) WWF light heavyweight champion

12—BILL GOLDBERG

(-) No. 8 contender: WCW World title

13—KANE

(8) No. 4 contender: WWF World title

14—SCOTT HALL

(-) No. 7 contender: WCW World title

15—SHANE DOUGLAS

(12) ECW heavyweight champion

WCW

1—STING

(1) 260, Venice Beach, CA

2—DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE

(3) 260, Tampa, FL

3—HULK HOGAN

(2) 275, Venice Beach, CA

4—LEX LUGER

(4) 265, Chicago, IL

5—BOOKER T

(7) 250, Harlem, NY

6—CHRIS JERICHO

(8) 225, Vancouver, British Columbia

7—CHRIS BENOIT

(9) 218, Edmonton, Alberta

8—SCOTT HALL

(-) 290, Miami, FL

9—BILL GOLDBERG

(13) 270, Tulsa, OK

10—PERRY SATURN

(-) 234, Cleveland, OH

11—RANDY SAVAGE

(-) 237, Sarasota, FL

12—RIC FLAIR

(10) 243, Charlotte, NC

13—JUVENTUD GUERRERA

(-) 165, Mexico City, Mexico

14—DAVEY BOY SMITH

(-) 245, Leeds, England

15—EDDY GUERRERO

(-) 221, El Paso, TX

WWF

1—SHAWN MICHAELS

(1) 234, San Antonio, TX

2—ROCKY MAIVIA

(2) 272, Pearl City, HI

3—STEVE AUSTIN

(3) 241, Dallas, TX

4—OWEN HART

(6) 227, Calgary, Alberta

5—KANE

(5) 345, parts unknown

6—KEN SHAMROCK

(7) 235, San Bernardino, CA

7—JEFF JARRETT

(9) 230, Nashville, TN

8—STEVE BLACKMAN

(-) 245, Annville, PA

9—TAKA MICHINOKU

(8) 169, Morioka, Japan

10—JUSTIN BRADSHAW

(-) 309, Roscoe, TX

11—SKULL

(-) 286, parts unknown

12—MARC MERO

(11) 235, Buffalo, NY

13—GOLDUST

(14) 254, Austin, TX

14—FAAROOQ

(15) 291, Perry, GA

15—BRIAN CHRISTOPHER

(-) 230, Memphis, TN

ECW

1—SHANE DOUGLAS

(1) 240, Pittsburgh, PA

2—TAZ

(2) 248, Red Hook, NY

3—BAM BAM BIGELOW

(7) 368, Mt. Laurel, NJ

4—CHRIS CHETTI

(11) 227, Amityville, NY

5—LANCE STORM

(-) 231, Memphis, TN

6—JUSTIN CREDIBLE

(8) 225, Waterbury, CT

7—TOMMY DREAMER

(5) 245, Yonkers, NY

8—AL SNOW

(10) 232, Lima, OH

9—CHRIS CANDIDO

(12) 226, Carteret, NJ

10—SABU

(3) 225, Bombay

11—THE SANDMAN

(6) 244, Philadelphia, PA

12—ROB VAN DAM

(4) 240, Battle Creek, MI

13—JERRY LYNN

(9) 214, Minneapolis, MN

14—SPIKE DUDLEY

(13) 155, parts unknown

15—JOHN KRONUS

(14) 256, Cleveland, OH

INTERNATIONAL

1—MITSU HARU MISAWA

(1) 228, Ashikaga, Japan

2—KENSUKE SASAKI

(2) 233, Tokyo, Japan

3—JUSHIN LIGER

(14) 206, Hiroshima, Japan

4—UNIVERSO 2000

(5) 215, parts unknown

5—TAKA MICHINOKU

(4) 169, Morioka, Japan

6—PERRO AGUAYO

(6) 215, Zacatecas, Mexico

7—KEIJI MUTO

(7) 245, Yamaguchi, Japan

8—FRANZ SCHUMANN

(9) 201, Graz, Austria

9—SHINYA HASHIMOTO

(3) 287, Gifu, Japan

10—SHINJIRO OTANI

(-) 215, Yokohama, Japan

11—KONNAN

(11) 237, Mexico City, Mexico

12—DUKE DROESE

(12) 306, Chicago, IL

13—MAUNUKEA MOSSMAN

(-) 245, Honolulu, HI

14—ATLANTIS

(8) 180, Guadalajara, Mexico

15—MASATO TANAKA

(13) 235, Tokyo, Japan

TOP 15 TAG TEAMS

1—BILLY GUNN & JESSE JAMES

(2) WWF World tag team champions

2—SCOTT HALL & KEVIN NASH

(1) WCW World tag team champions

3—MASA CHONO & KEIJI MUTO

(6) IWGP tag team champions

4—THE HEADBANGERS

(12) NWA tag team champions

5—CACTUS JACK & CHAINSAW CHARLIE

(11) No. 1 contenders: WWF World tag title

6—CHRIS CANDIDO & LANCE STORM

(4) ECW tag team champions

7—OWEN HART & KEN SHAMROCK

(7) No. 2 contenders: WWF World tag title

8—SABU & ROB VAN DAM

(-) No. 1 contenders: ECW tag title

9—MARCUS BAGWELL & SCOTT NORTON

(-) No. 1 contenders: WCW World tag title

10—BUH BUH RAY & D-VON DUDLEY

(13) No. 2 contenders: ECW tag title

11—HENRY & PHINEAS GODWINN

(9) No. 3 contenders: WWF World tag title

12—THE ROCK 'N' ROLL EXPRESS

(15) No. 1 contenders: NWA tag title

13—PUBLIC ENEMY

(-) No. 2 contenders: WCW World tag title

14—SHANE EDEN & FRENCHY RIVIERA

(-) Music City tag team champions

15—SKULL & EIGHT-BALL

(-) No. 4 contenders: WWF World tag title

These ratings are compiled by the editors with the assistance of promoters, wrestlers, and reporters around the country, and are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and the inherent skill of each wrestler. The number in parentheses indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (-) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue ... Championships highlighted in bold on the "Roll Call Of Champions" have changed hands since our previous issue ... The information under the championship listing indicates the date that champion won the title, who the former champion was, and where the match took place.

For period ended February 27, 1998

ROLL CALL OF CHAMPIONS

ALL-JAPAN INTERNATIONAL CHAMPION: MITSU HARU MISAWA
(January 20, 1997; from Kenta Kobashi; Osaka, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN INTERNATIONAL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: TOSHI AKI KAWADA & AKIRA TAUE
(January 25, 1998; from Johnny Ace & Kenta Kobashi; Yokohama, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN UNITED NATIONAL CHAMPION: MITSU HARU MISAWA
(January 20, 1997; from Kenta Kobashi; Osaka, Japan)

AMERICAN INDEPENDENT WRESTLING FEDERATION HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: CYCLONE
(October 18, 1997; from Major Havoc; Elkin, NC)

AMERICAN INDEPENDENT WRESTLING FEDERATION LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: GEMINI
(February 14, 1998; from Sweet Daddy; Elkin, NC)

AMERICAN INDEPENDENT WRESTLING FEDERATION TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: GENERATION X
(February 14, 1998; from The Biker Outlaws; Elkin, NC)

AMERICAN INDEPENDENT WRESTLING FEDERATION U.S. CHAMPION: JOHNNY REB
(January 3, 1998; from Brian Danzig; Elkin, NC)

CENTURY WRESTLING ALLIANCE HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: ERICH SBRACCIA
(January 24, 1998; beat Vic Steamboat in tournament final; Ridgefield, CT)

CENTURY WRESTLING ALLIANCE CRUISERWEIGHT CHAMPION: MILLENNIUM
(October 18, 1997; from Joel Davis; Lawrence, MA)

ECW HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: SHANE DOUGLAS
(November 30, 1997; from Bam Bam Bigelow; Monaca, PA)

ECW TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: CHRIS CANDIDO & LANCE STORM
(December 6, 1997; from Doug Furnas & Phil Lafon; Philadelphia, PA)

ECW TELEVISION CHAMPION: TAZ
(June 7, 1997; from Shane Douglas; Philadelphia, PA)

GREAT AMERICAN WRESTLING FEDERATION HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: TERMINATOR REX
(January 17, 1998; beat Chris Cannon; Red Oak, NC)

INT'L PRO WRESTLING HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: KING KONG BUNDY
(December 5, 1997; from Brick Bronsky; Jim Thorpe, PA)

IWGP HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: KENSUKE SASAKI
(August 31, 1997; from Shinya Hashimoto; Yokohama, Japan)

IWGP INTERNATIONAL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: MASA CHONO & KEIJI MUTO
(October 19, 1997; from Kensuke Sasaki & Kazuo Yamazaki; Kobe, Japan)

IWGP JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: JUSHIN LIGER
(February 7, 1998; from Shinjiro Otani; Sapporo, Japan)

MUSIC CITY WRESTLING NORTH AMERICAN CHAMPION: MABEL
(February 21, 1998; from Wolfie D; Nashville, TN)

MUSIC CITY WRESTLING TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: SHANE EDEN & FRENCHY RIVIERA
(February 21, 1998; from Steven Dunn & Reno Riggins; Nashville, TN)

NATIONAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: DAN SEVERN
(February 24, 1995; from Chris Candido; Erlanger, KY)

NATIONAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: DEVON STORM
(February 14, 1998; beat Reckless Youth in tournament final; Mount Holly, NJ)

NATIONAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE NORTH AMERICAN CHAMPION: JEFF JARRETT
(December 30, 1997; beat Barry Windham; New Haven, CT)

NATIONAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE HEADBANGERS
(February 17, 1998; from The Rock 'n' Roll Express; Waco, TX)

PACIFIC WRESTLING FEDERATION HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: MITSU HARU MISAWA
(January 20, 1997; from Kenta Kobashi; Osaka, Japan)

PACIFIC WRESTLING FEDERATION JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: MAUNUKEA MOSSMAN
(August 22, 1997; from Yoshinari Ogawa; Tokyo, Japan)

PACIFIC WRESTLING FEDERATION TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: TOSHI AKI KAWADA & AKIRA TAUE
(January 25, 1998; from Johnny Ace & Kenta Kobashi; Yokohama, Japan)

PENNSYLVANIA CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: TIGER KHAN
(November 21, 1997; from Cheetah Master; Reading, PA)

PENNSYLVANIA CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: RECKLESS YOUTH
(November 21, 1997; from Mike Quackenbush; Reading, PA)

PENNSYLVANIA CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: BLUE THUNDER & J.R. RYDER
(January 16, 1998; from The Persian Prince & Dave Patera; Reading, PA)

PRO WRESTLING FEDERATION HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: RIPPER
(December 6, 1997; from Italian Stallion; Kings Mountain, NC)

PRO WRESTLING FEDERATION JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: STRUTTER
(February 12, 1998; by forfeit from Krush; Albemarle, NC)

PRO WRESTLING FEDERATION TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: GEORGE SOUTH & ITALIAN STALLION
(December 6, 1997; from Chris Hamrick & Ripper; Kings Mountain, NC)

WCW CRUISERWEIGHT CHAMPION: CHRIS JERICHO
(January 24, 1998; from Rey Misterio Jr.; Dayton, OH)

WCW TELEVISION CHAMPION: BOOKER T
(February 22, 1998; from Rick Martel; San Francisco, CA)

WCW U.S. CHAMPION: DALLAS PAGE
(December 28, 1997; from Curt Hennig; Washington, D.C.)

WCW WORLD CHAMPION: STING
(February 22, 1998; beat Hulk Hogan; San Francisco, CA)

WCW WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: SCOTT HALL & KEVIN NASH
(February 22, 1998; from Rick & Scott Steiner; San Francisco, CA)

WWF EUROPEAN CHAMPION: OWEN HART
(January 20, 1998; beat Goldust; Davis, CA)

WWF INTERCONTINENTAL CHAMPION: ROCKY MAIVIA
(December 8, 1997; by forfeit from Steve Austin; Portland, ME)

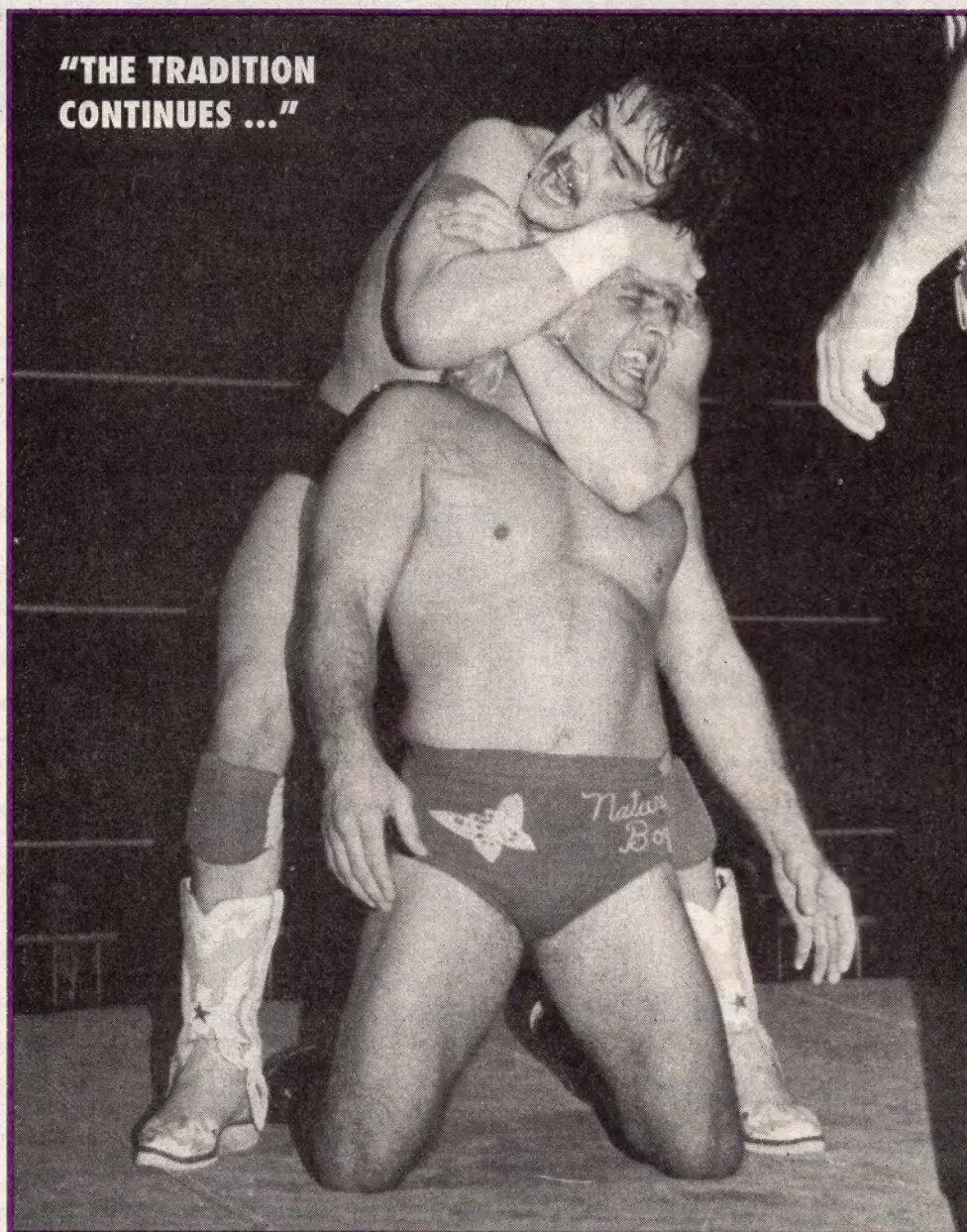
WWF LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: TAKA MICHINOKU
(December 7, 1997; beat Brian Christopher in tournament final; Springfield, MA)

WWF WORLD CHAMPION: SHAWN MICHAELS
(November 9, 1997; from Bret Hart; Montreal, Quebec)

WWF WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: BILLY GUNN & JESSE JAMES
(November 24, 1997; from The Road Warriors; Fayetteville, NC)

BLAST FROM THE PAST

This Month In Wrestling History



BLACKJACK MULLIGAN JR. vs. RIC FLAIR **June 1982**

Jim Cornette certainly hired the right man to bring some NWA tradition to the WWF. Barry Windham, who carried on his father's legacy by competing as Blackjack Mulligan Jr. for a while, was an NWA mainstay in the early-'80s and became a perennial challenger for Ric Flair's NWA title. Windham eventually won the belt, but not from Flair. He dethroned The Great Muta in February 1993, then lost the belt to the "Nature Boy" five months later.

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